

ART AND LETTERS

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ART AND LETTERS



N° 428. — A PANEL (5 ft. 8 in. by 1 ft. 6 in). Formerly the front of a Cassone or coffer, intended to contain the garments and jewels of a bride.

SUBJECT : THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE. — (*Umbrian School of the 15th century.*)

In the right hand corner is a half-effaced inscription :

DESIDER..... DE CIVITATE LAC..... ME..... ECIT.

This valuable painting is unfortunately much damaged by damp and mineral corrosives, owing probably to its having contained at one time buried treasure. Bequeathed in 1878 by the widow of the Reverend Lawson Stone, late fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.

(CATALOGUE OF THE SMITH MUSEUM, BIRMINGHAM.)

PAGES FROM AN UMBRIAN CHRONICLE OF THE XVth CENTURY

By Ascension day, Desiderio of Castiglione del Lago, had finished the front panel of the wedding chest, which Messer Troilo Baglioni had ordered

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of Ser Piero Bontempi, whose shop was situated at the bottom of the steps of Saint Maxentius, in that portion of the ancient city of Perugia—(called by the Romans Augusta, in recognition of its great glory,— which takes its name from the Ivory Gate, built by Theodoric, king of the Goths. The said Desiderio had represented upon this panel, the Triumph of Love, as described in his poem by Messer Francesco Petrarca of Arezzo, certainly, with the exception of that Dante who saw the vision of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise, the only poet of recent times who can be compared to those *doctissimi viri* : P. Virgilius, Ovidius of Sulmona, and Statius. And the said Desiderio had betaken himself in this manner. He had divided the panel into four portions or regions, intended to represent the four phases of the amorous passion : the first was a pleasant country, abundantly watered with twisting streams of great plenty and joyousness, and in which were planted many hedges of fragrant roses, both red and white, together with elms, poplars, and other pleasant and profitable trees. The second region was somewhat mountainous, but showing large store of lordly castles and thickets of fine oaks, fit for hunting, which region, as being that of glorious love, was girt all round with groves of laurels. The third region—*aspera ac dura regio*—was barren of all vegetation, save huge thorns, and ungrateful thistles and in it, on rocks, was shown the pelican, who tears his own entrails to feed his young, symbolical of the cruelty of love to true lovers. Finally, the fourth region was a melancholy cypress wood, among which roosted owls, and ravens and other birds of evil omen, in order to display the fact that all earthly love leads but to death.

Each of these regions was surrounded by a wreath of myrtles, marvelously drawn, and with great subtlety of invention devised so as to meet the carved and gilded cornice, likewise composed of myrtles, which Ser Piero executed with singular skill, with his own hand. In the middle of the panel, Desiderio had represented Love, even as the poet has described : a naked youth, with wings of wondrous changing colours, enthroned upon a chariot, the axles and wheels of which were red gold, and covered with a cloth of gold, of such subtle device, that that whole chariot seemed really to be on fire ; on his back hung a bow and a quiver full of dreadful arrows, and in his hands he held the reins of four snow-white coursers,

trapped with gold, and breathing fire from their nostrils. Round his eyes was bound a kerchief, fringed with gold, to show that Love strikes blindly; and from his shoulders floated a scroll inscribed with the words, "*Sævus Amor, hominum deorumque delicie.*"

Round his car, some before, some behind, some on horseback, and some on foot, crowded those who have been famous for their love. Here you might see, on a bay horse, with an eagle on his helmet, Julius Cæsar, who loved Cleopatra, the Queen of Egypt; Sophonisba, and Massinissa, in rich and strange Arabian garments; Orpheus, seeking for Eurydice with his lute; Phædra, who died for love of Hippolytus her stepson; Mark Anthony: Rinaldo of Montalbano, who loved the fair Angelica; Socrates, Tibullus, Virgil and other poets with Messer Francesco Petrarca, and Messer Giovanni Boccaccio; Tristram, who drank the love potion, riding on a sorrel horse and near him, Isotta, wearing a turban of cloth of gold; and those lovers of Rimini, and many more besides, the naming of whom would be too long, even as the poet has described.

And in the region of happy love among the laurels, he had painted his own likeness, red-haired, with a green hood falling on his shoulders; and this because he was to wed, next Saint John's Day, Maddalena, the only daughter of his employer Ser Piero. And among the unhappy lovers, he painted, at his request, Messer Troilo himself, for whom he was making this coffer. And Messer Troilo was depicted in the character of Troilus the son of Priam Emperor of Troy; he was habited in armour, covered with a surcoat of white cloth of silver, embroidered with roses; by his side was his lance, and on his head a scarlet cap: behind him were those who carried his falcon and led his hack, and men-at-arms with his banner, dressed in green and yellow parti-coloured, with a scorpion embroidered on their doublet; and from his lance floated a pennon, inscribed, "*Troilus sum servus Amoris.*"

But Desiderio refused to paint among the procession Monna Maddalena, Piero's daughter, who was to be his wife; because he declared: it was not fit that modest damsels should lend their face to other folk; and this he said because Ser Piero had begged him not to incense Messer Troilo; for in reality he had often portrayed Monna Maddalena (the which

was marvellously lovely), though only, it is true, in the figure of our Lady, the Mother of God.

And the panel was ready by Ascension day, and Ser Piero had prepared the box, and the carvings, and gildings, griffins and chimæras, and acanthus leaves and myrtles, with the arms of Messer Troilo Baglioni, a most beautiful work. And Maestro Cavanna of the gate of Saint Peter had made a lock and a key, of marvellous workmanship, for the same coffer. And Messer Troilo would come frequently, riding over from his castle of Fratta, and see the work while it was progressing; and entertain himself lengthily at the shop, speaking with benignity and wisdom wonderful in one so young, for he was only nineteen; which pleased the heart of Ser Piero; but Desiderio did not relish it, for which reason he was often gruff to Messer Troilo, and had many disputes with his future father-in-law.

For Messer Troilo Baglioni, called Barbacane, to distinguish him from another Troilo, his uncle, who was bishop of Spello although a bastard, had cast his eyes on Maddalena de Ser Piero Bontempi. He had seen the damsel for the first time on the occasion of the wedding festivities of his cousin, Grifone Baglioni, son of Ridolfo the elder, with Deianira degli Orsini: on which occasion marvellous things were done in the city of Perugia, both by the magnificent House of Baglioni, and the citizens: such as banquets, jousts, horse races, balls in the square near the cathedral, bull fights, allegories, both Latin and vulgar, presented with great learning and sweetness (among which was the fable of Perseus, how he freed Andromeda, written by master Giannozzo Belli, *Rector magnificus istæ universitatis*) and triumphal arches, and other similar devices, in which Ser Piero Bontempi made many beautiful inventions, in company with Benedetto Bonfigli, Messer Fiorenzo di Lorenzo and Piero de Castro Plebis, whom the Holiness of Our Lord Pope Sixtus IV, afterwards summoned to work in his chapel in Rome.

On this occasion, I repeat, Messer Troilo Baglioni of Fratta, who was *unanimiter* declared to be a most beautiful and courteous youth of singular learning and prowess, and well worthy of this magnificent Baglioni family, cast his eyes on Maddalena di Ser Piero; and sent her, through his squire,

the knot of ribbons off the head of a ferocious bull, whom he had killed *singulari vi ac virtute*. Nor did Messer Troilo neglect other opportunities of seeing the damsel, such as at church, and at her father's shop, riding over from his castle at Fratta on purpose, but always *honestis valde modibus*, as the damsel showed herself very coy, and refused all presents which he sent her. Neither did Ser Piero prevent his honestly conversing with the damsel, fearing the anger of the magnificent family of Baglioni; but Desiderio di Citta del Lago, the which was affianced to Monna Maddalena, often had words with Ser Piero on the subject, and one day well-nigh broke the ribs of Messer Troilo's squire, whom he charged with carrying dishonest messages.

Now it so happened that Messer Troilo, as he was the most beautiful, benign, and magnanimous of his magnificent family, was also the most cruel thereof, and incapable of brooking delay or obstacles. And being, as a most beautiful youth—he was only turned nineteen, and the first down not come to his cheeks, and his skin was astonishingly white, and smooth like a woman's—of a very amorous nature (of which many fables went, concerning the violence he had done to damsels and citizens' wives of Gubbio and Spello, and evil deeds in the castle of Fratta in the Apennines, some of which it is more beautiful to pass in silence than to relate) being as I say of an amorous nature, and greatly magnanimous and ferocious of spirit, Messer Troilo was determined to possess himself of this Maddalena di Ser Piero.

So, a week after having fetched away the wedding chest from Ser Piero's workshop (paying for it duly in Florentine lilies), he seized the opportunity of the festivities of Saint John's Nativity, when it is the habit of the citizens to go to their gardens and vineyards, to see how the country is going, and eat and drink in honest converse with their friends, in order to satisfy his cruel wishes. For it so happened that the said Ser Piero, who was rich and prosperous, possessing an orchard in the valley of the Tiber, near San Giovanni, was entertaining his friends there, it being the eve of his daughter's wedding, peaceful and unarmed. And a serving wench, a moor and a slave, who had been bribed by Messer Troilo, proposed to Monna Maddalena and the damsels of her company, to refresh themselves, after

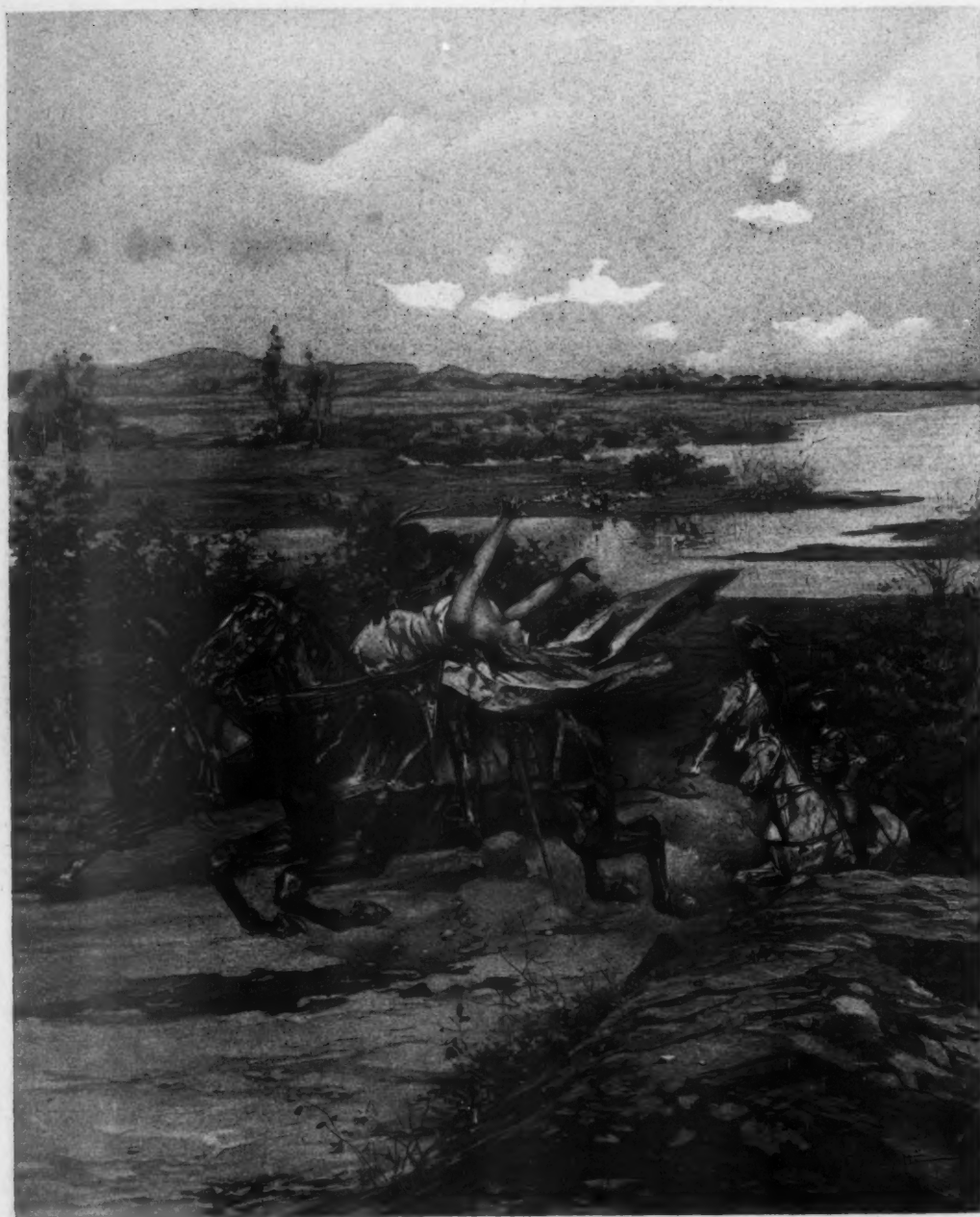
picking flowers, playing with hoops, asking riddles, and similar girlish games, by bathing in the Tiber, which flowed at the bottom of the orchard. To this the innocent virgin, full of joyousness, consented. Hardly had the damsels descended into the river bed, the river being low and easy to ford, on account of the summer, when behold, there swept from the opposite bank a troop of horsemen, armed and masked, who seized the astonished Maddalena, and hurried off with her, vainly screaming, like another Proserpina, to her companions, who, surprised, and ashamed at being seen with no garments, screamed in return but in vain. The horsemen galloped off through Bastia, and disappeared long before Ser Piero and his friends could come to the rescue.

Thus was Monna Maddalena cruelly taken from her father and bridegroom, through the amorous passion of Messer Troilo.

Ser Piero fell upon the ground, fainting for grief, and remained for several days like one dead; and when he came to, he wept, and cursed wickedly, and refused to take food, and sleep, and to shave his beard. But being old and prudent, and the father of other children, he conquered his grief, well knowing that it was useless to oppose providence, or fight, being but a handicraftsman, with the magnificent family of Baglioni, lords of Perugia since many years, and as rich and powerful as they were magnanimous and implacable.

So that when people began to say that after all, Monna Maddalena might have fled willingly with a lover, and that there was no proof that the masked horsemen came from Messer Troilo (although those of Bastia affirmed that they had seen the green and yellow colours of Fratta, and the said Troilo came not near the town many months after), he never contradicted such words, out of prudence and fear. But Desiderio of Castiglione del Lago, hearing these words, struck the old man on the mouth till he bled.

And it came to pass, about a year after the disappearance of Monna Maddalena, and when (particularly as there had been a plague in the city, and many miracles had been performed by a holy nun of the convent of Santa Anna, the which fasted seventy days, and Messer Ascanio Baglioni had raised a company of horse for the Florentine Signiory in their war



against those of Siena), people had ceased to talk of the matter, that certain armed men, masked, but wearing the colours of Messer Troilo, and the scorpion on their doublet, rode over from Fratta, bringing with them a coffer wrapped in black baize, which they deposited overnight on Ser Piero Bontempi's doorstep.

And Ser Piero, going at daybreak to his workshop, found that coffer; and recognizing it as the same which had been made, with a panel representing the Triumph of Love and many ingenious devices of sculpture and gilding, for Messer Troilo called Barbacane, he trembled in all his limbs, and went and called Desiderio; and with him privily carried the chest into a secret chamber in his house, saying not a word to any creature. The key, a subtle piece of work of the smith Cavanna, was hanging to the lock by a green silk string, on to which was tied a piece of parchment containing these words :

TO MASTER DESIDERIO

A WEDDING GIFT FROM TROILO BAGLIONI OF FRATTA

an allusion doubtless, *ferox atque cruenta facetia*, to the Triumph of Love, according to Messer Francesco Petrarca, painted upon the front of the coffer. The lid being raised, they came to a piece of red cloth, such as is used for mules, *etiam*, a fold of common linen; and below it, a coverlet of green silk, which, being raised, their eyes were met (*heu! infandum patri scelleratumque donum*), by the body of Monna Maddalena naked, as God had made it, dead, with two stabs in the neck, the long golden hair tied with pearls, but dabbled in blood; the which Maddalena was cruelly squeezed into that coffer, having on her breast the body of an infant, recently born, dead like herself.

When he beheld this sight, Ser Piero threw himself on the floor and wept, and uttered dreadful blasphemies. But Desiderio of Castiglione del Lago, said nothing; but called a brother of Ser Piero, a priest and prior of Saint Severus; and with his assistance carried the coffer into the garden.

This garden, within the walls of the city, on the side of Porta Eburnea, was pleasantly situated, and abounding in flowers and trees, useful both

for their fruit and their shade, and rich likewise in all such herbs as thyme, marjoram, fennel and many others, that prudent housewives desire for their kitchen; all watered by stone canals, ingeniously constructed by Ser Piero, which were fed from a fountain, where you might see a mermaid squeezing the water from her breasts, a subtle device of the same Piero, and executed in a way such as would have done honour to Praxiteles, in soft stone from Monte Catria.

In this place Desiderio of Castiglione del Lago dug a deep grave under an almond tree, the which grave he carefully lined with stones and slabs of marble, which he tore up from the pavement, in order to diminish the damp, and then requested the priest, Ser Piero's brother who had helped him in the work, to fetch his sacred vestments, and books, and all necessary for consecrating the ground.

This the priest immediately did, being a holy man, and sore grieved for the case of his niece. Meanwhile, with the help of Ser Piero, Desiderio tenderly lifted the body of Monna Maddalena out of the wedding chest, washed it in odorous waters, and dressed it in fine linen and bridal garments, not without much weeping over the poor damsel's sad plight, and curses upon the cruelty of her ravisher: and having embraced her tenderly, they laid her once more in the box painted with the Triumph of Love, upon folds of fine damask, and brocade, her hands folded, and her head decently placed upon a pillow of silver cloth, a wreath of roses, which Desiderio himself plaited, on her hair, so that she looked like a holy saint, or the damsel Julia, daughter of the Emperor Augustus Cæsar, who was discovered buried on the Appian Way, and incontinently fell into dust, a marvellous thing.

They filled the chest with as many flowers as they could find, also sweet scented herbs, bay leaves, orris powder, frankincense, ambergris, and a certain gum called in Syrian Fizelis, and by the Jews Barach, in which they say the body of King David was kept intact from earthly corruption, and which the priest, the brother of Ser Piero, who was learned in all alchemy and astrology had bought of certain Moors.

Then, with many alases, and tears, they covered the damsel's face with an embroidered veil, and a fold of brocade; and closing the chest,

buried it in the hole, among great store of hay and straw, and sand, and closed it up, and smoothed the earth, and to mark the place, Desiderio planted a tuft of fennel under the almond tree. But not before having embraced the damsel many times, and taken a handful of earth from her grave, and eaten it, with many imprecations upon Messer Troilo, which it were terrible to relate.

Then the priest, the brother of Ser Piero, said the service of the dead, Desiderio serving him as acolyte; and they all went their way, grieving sorely.

But the body of the child, the which had been found in the wedding chest, they threw down a place near Saint Herculani, where the refuse and offal and dead animals are thrown, called the *Sardegna*, because it was the bastard of Ser Troilo et *infamiae scelerisque partus*.

Then, as this matter got abroad, and also Desiderio's imprecations against Ser Troilo, Ser Piero, who was an old man and prudent, caused him to depart privily from Perugia, for fear of the wrath of the magnificent Orazio Baglioni, uncle of Messer Troilo, and lord of the town.

Desiderio of Castiglione del Lago went to Rome, where he did wonderful things, and beautiful, among others certain frescoes in Saints Cosmas and Damian, for the Cardinal of Ostia; and to Naples, where he entered the service of the Duke of Calabria, and followed his armies long, building fortresses and making machines, and models for cannon, and other ingenious and useful things. And thus for seven years, until he heard that Ser Piero was dead at Perugia of a surfeit of eels; and that Messer Troilo was in the city, raising a company of horse with his cousin Astorre Baglioni for the Duke of Urbino: and this was before the plague, and the terrible coming to Umbria of the Spaniards and renegade Moors under Cæsar Borgia, *Vicarius Sanctæ Ecclesiæ, seu vere Flagellum Dei et novus Attila*.

So Desiderio came back privily to Perugia, and put up his mule at a small inn, having dyed his hair black, and grown his beard after the manner of Easterns, saying he was a Greek, coming from Ancona.

And he went to the priest, prior of Saint Severus and brother of Ser Piero, and discovered himself to him, who although old, had great joy in

seeing him, and hearing of his intent. And Desiderio confessed all his sins to the priest, and obtained absolution, and received the Body of Christ with great fervour and compunction; and the Priest placed his sword on the altar, beside the Gospel, and he said mass, and blessed it. And Desiderio knelt and made a vow never to touch food, save the Body of Christ, till he could taste of the blood of Messer Troilo.

And for three days, and three nights he watched him, and dogged him, but Messer Troilo rarely went unaccompanied by his men, because he had offended so many honourable citizens by his amorous fury, and he knew that his kinsmen dreaded him, and would gladly be rid of him, on account of his ferocity and ambition, and their desire to unite the fief of Fratta to the other lands of the main line of the magnificent House of Baglioni, famous in arms.

But one day towards dusk, Desiderio saw Messer Troilo coming down a steep lane near Saint Herculanius, alone; for he was going to a woman of light fame, called Flavia Bella, the which was very lovely. So Desiderio threw some ladders from a neighbouring mill, which was being built, and sacks across the road, and hid under an arch that spanned the lane, which was greatly steep and narrow. And Messer Troilo came down, on foot, whistling and paring his nails with a small pair of scissors. And he was dressed in grey silk hose, and a doublet of red cloth and gold brocade, pleated about the skirt and embroidered with seed pearl, and laced with gold laces; and on his head he had a hat of scarlet cloth with many feathers; and his cloak and sword he carried under his left arm. And Messer Troilo was twenty-six years old, but seemed much younger, having no beard, and a face like Hyacinthus or Ganymede, whom Jove stole to be his cup-bearer, on account of his beauty. And he was tall and very ferocious and magnanimous of spirit. And as he went, going to Flavia the courtesan, he whistled.

And when he came near the heaped up ladders and the sacks Desiderio sprang upon him, and tried to run his sword through him. But although wounded, Messer Troilo grappled with him long, but he could not get at his sword, which was entangled in his cloak, and before he could free his hand and get out his dagger, Desiderio had him down,

and ran his sword three times through his chest, exclaiming :—"This is from Maddalena, in return for her wedding chest!" and Messer Troilo, seeing the blood flowing from his chest, knew he must die, and merely said :—

"Which Maddalena? Ah! I remember, old Piero's daughter. She was always a cursed difficult slut." And died.

And Desiderio stooped over his chest, and lapped up the blood as it flowed : and it was the first food he tasted since taking the Body of Christ, even as he had sworn.

Then Desiderio went straightway to the fountain under the arch of Saint Praxedis, where the women wash linen in the day-time, and cleaned himself a little from blood. Then he fetched his mule and hid it in some trees near Messer Piero's garden, and at night, he opened the door, the priest having given him the key, and went in, and with a spade and mattock he had brought, dug up the wedding chest with the body of Monna Maddalena in it; the which, owing to those herbs and virtuous gums, had dried up, and become much lighter, and he found the spot by looking for the fennel tuft under the almond tree, which was then in flower, it being spring.

He loaded the chest, which was mouldy and decayed, on the mule, and drove the mule before him till he got to Castiglione del Lago, where he hid. And meeting certain horsemen, who asked him what he carried in that box (for they took him for a thief), he answered his sweetheart : so they laughed, and let him pass.

Thus he got safely into the Territory of Arezzo, an ancient city of Tuscany, where he stopped.

Now when they found the body of Messer Troilo, there was much astonishment and wonder. And his kinsmen were greatly wrath; but Messer Orazio and Messer Ridolfo, his uncles, said :—"Tis as well : for indeed his courage and ferocity were too great, and he would have done some evil to us all had he lived." But they ordered him a magnificent burial. And when he lay in the street dead, many folks, particularly painters, came to look at him for his great beauty; and the women pitied him on account of his youth, and certain scholars compared him

to Mars, God of War, so great was his strength and ferocity even in death. And he was carried to the grave by eight men-at-arms, and twelve damsels and youths dressed in white walked behind, strewing flowers, and there was much splendour and lamentation on account of the great power of the magnificent House of Baglioni.

As regards Desiderio of Castiglione del Lago, he remained at Arezzo till his death, preserving with him always the body of Monna Maddalena in the wedding chest, painted with the Triumph of Love, because he considered she had died in *odore magnæ sanctitatis*.

VERNON LEE.





THE HISTORY OF A DUEL

I

THE PROVOCATION

Their altercation suddenly began to cause a stir in the brilliantly lighted café, which was filled with people coming from the theatres.

The young men were standing face to face in a corner, gesticulating violently. One was very tall, the other very short; both were in evening dress. They had for some time been disputing in low voices; but without hearing what was said, it was not difficult for their neighbours to see from the expression of their faces that an open quarrel was imminent.

The waiters, transfixed by curiosity, neglected their duty and stood still, with trays or plates in their hands, intercepting the view of several clubmen, who rose from their seats, in their anxiety to catch a glimpse of the disputants. A lady at the further end of the room laid her hand on the arm of the gentleman who was with her, with one of those indescribable movements of tenderness, which either give or ask protection.

Other women, feeling something was amiss, took up their gloves, their opera-glasses, or their fans from the marble-topped tables, so as to be ready to leave at once, in case of a disturbance.

The two men, on whom all eyes were fixed, rapidly became more incensed, and insulting epithets were distinguishable amid the angry murmurs of their voices. Suddenly every one heard one of the young men say : "You are the biggest scoundrel in the world!"

This superlative evidently quite threw into the shade the epithet "scoundrel" which had before been freely interchanged, and after a moment's hesitation, "the biggest scoundrel" gave a rather rough push to the "scoundrel" pure and simple.

It was now his turn to pause for an instant in surprise; then he suddenly raised the hand with which he had been impatiently beating the air, and brought it up with a loud smack against the other's face.

In the confusion which immediately followed this, the elegant assemblage gave a sigh of relief, for this definite action was, as it were, a guarantee against any further disturbance of a more vulgar kind. A slap in the face is conclusive, and *comme il faut*. It forms part of a code of ceremonies both active and passive, well understood by "men of honour," who regard it as a speciality of polite society.

At the same moment a cloud seemed to rise from the brows of the adversaries, as if they were relieved from some moral oppression. Their former awkwardness disappeared as if it had only been caused by respect for their neighbours, and the fear of breaking the rules of etiquette before so many on-lookers.

Each gracefully and gravely handed his card to the other, and each pretended to decipher the name and address on the other's card, as if he did not know it already by heart, by his heart of an old friend. Then in their eagerness to escape from the notice and curiosity of the fashionable crowd about them, each seized upon the other's hat, the short one thrusting head and ears into the hat of the tall one; and while the waiters officiously assisted them into their coats, the necessary exchange was made with great show of civility; then with a low bow to each other they parted, walking stiffly towards the doors they had so often

entered arm in arm. There, each paused in an access of politeness to let the other pass out first.

At last M. de Sempach decided to precede the other, urged to hasten his steps by the certain knowledge that the red marks of five fingers would very soon be accurately limned upon his cheek. M. Préfanier followed him without delay, almost treading upon his heels.

Although neither could distinguish any definite idea amid the confusion of mind under which he was labouring, both felt very ill at ease, and the sudden freshness of the outer air gave both the same impression that it was a foretaste of the field where they would soon have to encounter one another. The air seemed to be wild and brutal in contrast with the warm, gas-lit, civilized atmosphere of the café.

M. de Sempach pulled himself together with a jaunty air, intended to show that he rose superior to circumstances, in case Préfanier should follow him, and marched down the Boulevard des Capucines; but Préfanier had already turned up the Rue Auber which led straight to his domicile. Their departure was watched by all those who were near enough to the windows to have a chance of looking out over the low blinds of the café, and who gazed with half-opened mouths and expressionless eyes after the figures of these perfect men of the world.

Gradually as Sempach walked onwards and the faculty of reasoning began to re-assert itself in him, the confusion into which his mind had been thrown by what had occurred, gave place to a growing sense of inward rage.

When he had been struck the young man had experienced that stupor which most people, however strong-minded, feel under the shock of an act of unexpected spite. He was as astonished as a Newfoundland attacked by a pug. Now he asked himself if the act of responding to a slap in the face by feeling in his pocket for his card-case, was the best way of maintaining his dignity before so many spectators— What were their present comments on his behaviour? Did they think, he wondered, that he ought rather to have flung himself on his assailant, and given him then and there a thoroughly good thrashing? Was he not,

with his athletic figure, broad shoulders, and muscular legs, the very man to undertake such speedy reprisals?

Thinking thus, he hastened his steps, now and then pulling impatiently at his long, black whiskers, which did not conceal the exasperating marks he felt burning on his cheek. Then he conjured up in his mind Préfanier's angry little figure, his face full of defiance, with its light moustachios seeming to bristle with rage.

How could Préfanier have acted so badly towards him! An old college chum, a friend of twenty years' standing——

He, himself, had had nothing to do in the matter; turn things over in his mind as much as he might, he could not find any fault on his side; all the wrong-doing was on the side of Préfanier.

If Préfanier's conduct with regard to Madame Ormel had become questionable, and people had begun to make remarks about it, was it not entirely Préfanier's own fault?

If any one were to say that he, Sempach, had joined in the chorus, and spoken more decidedly than others, he was quite ready to allow that this was true, and that he had been in the right in so doing.

Was he not Préfanier's most intimate friend, and the friend also of Alphonse Ormel? He was even the friend of Madame Ormel (though in a less degree than he could have wished), and surely he had a right to express his opinion!

But no one must for a moment suppose that he was himself in love with Madame Ormel. The possibility of this supposition troubled him; for she was just one of those women with whom the craving for pleasure and excitement is so strong, that every man thinks it possible, or even easy, to gain ascendancy over them, even without exactly knowing how this is to be done.

In these cases even the most indifferent are annoyed, if any one seems to have found the right road to conquest. With such women, men feel so sure of success, that they keep them in reserve while they run after prizes more difficult to gain. When in their presence, a man thinks, "To-morrow I can have her for the asking," and life passes without any change in the position of affairs.

Mercedes Ormel was peculiar in this—that she was born in the island of Cuba, among tobacco plantations, and unlike most of the women with whom one flirts, she did not remind one of some delicate flower, but had a perverse, intoxicating charm, which was piquant, like that of some acclimatised exotic. “Does not my wife remind you of a choice cigar?” her husband would often remark, pointing her out where she stood, her straight, thin figure clothed in dark, tight-fitting garments, above which her face sparkled out—a face formed rather to cause dissensions, than to inspire a poet. Many men would have considered her plain, and uninteresting, with her thin, straight figure, rather harsh voice, and bronze, coarse-grained skin; but any one who, like M. de Sempach, was a great smoker, was, owing to this special depravity of taste, bound to admire her.

He drove away the image which had suddenly arisen in his mind, and recalled the series of events which had just taken place. He recalled the painful moment when Préfanier had ceased to address him with the easy familiarity of friendship, and a lump seemed to rise in his throat; then when he thought of the insult of that evening, regret gave place to indignation. Sempach was certainly not afraid; but for the first time in his life, it occurred to him that the duel is an outrage against one of the most sacred laws of Providence. How absurd it was that he, Sempach, who was big enough to swallow the little wretch at a mouthful, should be obliged by the artificial laws of etiquette to lower himself to Préfanier's level, by the use of weapons which would place both upon an equal footing!

“The fool!” he growled again and again, drawing deep breaths into his powerful lungs, and thus increasing the size of his magnificent chest. By this time he was talking aloud and walking at topmost speed, casting lowering glances to this side and that, so that passers-by thought he was suffering from temporary insanity.

II

THE CHOICE OF SECONDS

Sempach soon reached the Rue Basse-du-Rempart, and stopped at the door of the Cosmopolitan Club. He walked mechanically towards the

staircase which led to the card rooms, the carpet of which was brought down to the street. As he ascended the stairs he vigorously rubbed his bearded cheeks to give them an uniform colour. He determined to risk and probably lose all the money he had about him, so as to work off, if possible, the excitement to which he was now a prey, by directing it into a different channel.

The first person he saw in the room facing that devoted to baccarat, was the Count de Brugnans, who was sitting in a careless attitude, with his lazy hands tucked into the arm-holes of his waistcoat. This elegant old man who, according to report, was called Lecomte at Monte-Carlo and Brugnans at Spa, had at Paris a great reputation as an adept in all that concerned "affairs of honour." He was very greatly respected as an accomplished duelist although he had never in his life, played any more important part than that of second. Such small details, however, are apt to become confused in the memory of the public. To have been second on the field three times, is to all intents and purposes as good as to have played first fiddle on one occasion. The Count de Brugnans had small bright eyes, hollow cheeks, a Bourbon nose, a pointed chin, and a rather hanging lower lip, partially covered by his long pointed moustache, which, like his "imperial," was quite white. His austere appearance was such as to give him an air of superiority in all public assemblies, as well as in affairs of honour and billiard matches. On the stage he might well have portrayed the retired general, who no longer wears his ribbon of the Legion of Honour, since his daughter has committed an indiscretion. In prison where he might have spent some time no one would have dreamed of asking him to do any harder labour than a little writing. No one knew what were the means of the Count de Brugnans, nor ever invited him to a meal other than that taken after a duel which he had brought to a happy conclusion; but no one could ever find anything at which to cavil in his conduct. From early morning he was always well-shaven and made up, and attired in a tightly-fitting frock-coat and polished shoes, and one might be quite sure, on opening the door of his room, to find him ready and willing to serve as second and to demand apologies of all kinds.

Under the circumstances which occupied Sempach's mind, he was at once struck by the venerable appearance of the specialist, whose reputation and title he instantly recalled.

"Hullo, young millionaire," exclaimed Brugnans as he entered, addressing him with the familiarity of an old friend. "Can you lend me ten louis?"

"With pleasure," replied Sempach, who was relieved by this request which made it easy for him to get to business. He rolled a chair up next to M. de Brugnans' seat, and began at once to explain the aspect of affairs.

The old man listened silently, gravely, and in a fatherly way; in short he gave far more attention than he need for the paltry sum of ten louis. Sometimes he gave a deprecatory shrug, sometimes he winked with an expression of clear comprehension as if meaning to indicate that he perfectly realized and appreciated the situation.

"Good! very good!" he exclaimed at last. Then he assumed a still more solemn demeanour, sat up crossing his legs, which had previously been stretched out, one over the other, and began to explain that if he had been consulted before the present crisis the matter would have passed off more satisfactorily. In conclusion he said, however: "We are the offended party, and that is what I prefer. I will take charge of the affair, my dear boy, it is my twenty-seventh."

"Tell me, have any of your clients ever—— ever come to grief?"

"Never! Not one of them!" exclaimed the Count proudly.

"All the better!" murmured Sempach, with a decided feeling of relief. Then for a moment both were silent, experiencing one of those sudden convictions the logic of which is so very questionable.

"Well," went on the old man, "you have some knowledge of the use of weapons, haven't you?—— No?—— all right. It is of no importance. Have you another second? Because I can introduce one to you. He is just here. Constantinowich!" he called, without waiting for a reply.

Constantinowich, who was a captain of the Bulgarian army, enjoying a prolonged leave, came forward with a formal and martial bearing. He had large, mild blue eyes, without much expression in them, a beardless

face and short golden hair. When a member of the club did not like the idea of a supping alone, he asked Constantinowich to join him. If any one had a seat to spare in his victoria for the races, or in his box at the theatre, he invited Constantinowich. In spite of all this, however, the Captain was not of the race of those who are asked at the last moment to be the fourteenth at dinner, chiefly because it was not necessary for the party to be more than twelve before the want of him was felt. He was rather the second, third, or at most the fourth to be invited. Moreover Constantinowich was not what we call a "diner-out," a teller of anecdotes, like the amiable person we all know, who shares in succession the opinions of every one who is present. It was not his habit, either to approve, or to disapprove of anything. In fact he never uttered a word, so that in his presence people could rejoice to the full in talking without fear of contradiction. Every one felt him to be a "character," and by dint of being nothing in particular, he at length became somebody.

Even while thanking the Count for his sympathy and help, Sempach experienced the sensations of pain and anxiety of one who is caught in a trap.

"It is understood, I suppose, that if apologies are offered,—" began the Count.

"Ah, ah! apologies!" interrupted Sempach, who had no thought of this before, and in whom the idea struck a chord of pleasure.

The Count raised his eyebrows slightly, and Sempach, afraid of being thought a coward, sought refuge in the act of taking out Préfanier's card, and offering it to de Brugnans with the words: "This is my opponent's card."

"Right! then at mid-day, to-morrow, the Captain and I will call upon him."

Sempach's heart gave a great thump. To-morrow!— at mid-day!— A flash of memory called up the only instance in which he had experienced the same feeling. His horse had run away in a narrow alley in the Bois de Boulogne. Now this affair was beyond his control like that wicked brute.

"Don't you think," he said hesitatingly, and with a conciliatory manner, "that we ought—— that it would be better if we were to wait another!—— ought we not to leave the initiative to them?——"

"What!" exclaimed the old man, "surely it is you who received the blow?"

"But I pushed him, I confess even that I pushed him very rudely first!—— Look! I pushed him like this——" and after having previously apologised to him, Sempach illustrated the situation by taking Constantinowich by the shoulder, and shaking him roughly. He repeated this operation a second time for fear of not illustrating the situation sufficiently and increased his efforts as the Count shook his head more decidedly, while the Captain submitted to the experiment, neither resisting nor facilitating it, but perfectly unmoved, and with his mild blue eyes as expressionless as ever.

"If you pushed him," said Brugnans judiciously, "it was doubtless because he insulted you first?"

"Yes! he said 'I was the biggest scoundrel in the world!'"

"There! you see I was right!"

"Yes, but I had called him *scoundrel* first!"

Sempach was now eager to discover excuses for his adversary, and it would not have taken much to have made him invent some. But his chief second cut short this ebullition with the words:

"This is childish, we are in the right—— but one word more, you will choose the sword as the weapon, won't you?"

Sempach shivered, but replied without hesitation:

"Certainly! the sword."

"And the meeting is to be arranged for the day after to-morrow?"

The young man thought a moment, pretending to consider the dates of his other engagements, and then said:

"I should prefer to make it a day later."

The Count did not object to this as it allowed him a day longer to play, and to enjoy, his part in the proceedings, and Constantinowich having by his silence given his consent, gracefully seized the hand of his principal in his own large and firm grasp, from which all other hands

passed with a feeling of having been crushed, and red from the pressure.

Sempach was at the bottom of the stairs, and just leaving, when the old man called after him: "St!—my boy—— You have forgotten my ten louis."

*
* *

Meanwhile Préfanier had returned to the entresol which he occupied in the Rue de l'Arcade, beneath the flat rented by his parents. He did not undress, but marched up and down his room to calm his nerves, and think out the situation.

His inseparables, Alphonse Ormel and Jacques Bernoir were evidently the seconds he required. They both belonged to the same school of arms as he did, and all three made a practice of frequently fencing with each other. Often when excited by this mimic warfare, they had reciprocally adjured each other in a loud voice, so that the bystanders might appreciate the fact, that if ever one of them were to have an affair of honour on hand, he would ask the others to be his seconds.

And in these moments of expansion, all three eagerly looked forward to a chance of proving their prowess.

Even now, Préfanier was not much put out at the prospect of a speedy fulfilment of this desire; but warned by experience of parallel cases, he felt just a little alarmed that he would be afraid when it came literally to the point. He remembered certain dangers which from afar off he had quite sincerely felt prepared to dare, but in the face of which his powers of immediate action had become paralysed. For example, he had once at the last moment given up a balloon excursion, an invitation to which he had gladly accepted. His present courage, then, felt some doubt of what might happen in the face of the events of the near future.

What made him think, however, that he would come all right out of the affair, was that he should have to encounter, not the stern face of a stranger, but that of an old acquaintance. Every time he endeavoured to conjure up a picture of the prospective encounter, he saw before him

the good-natured face of his old friend Sempach, and then it seemed to him as if all the incidents of this horrible duel would be characterized by an absence of constraint, and a sort of familiarity quite exceptional under these circumstances, and almost amounting to cordiality. At this point an impulse of affection towards Sempach asserted itself inopportunely in the heart and mind of Préfanier. He felt a kind of remorse not for the past, but for what was about to happen, and he set to work at once to overhaul his conduct in the matter; but very naturally ended by finding that he had nothing with which to reproach himself.

Certainly Préfanier was quite aware that a great many people had made unpleasant remarks concerning his conduct with regard to Madame Ormel. But one cannot distribute smacks in the face all round one's circle of acquaintances. He had struck Sempach because Sempach at least was his friend, and ought to have known better.

Next day, after a restless night, Préfanier jumped lightly out of bed and before nine o'clock rang at the door of Jacques Bernoir whom he found still in bed. After the first few words, the little auditor at the Council of State sat up, very much interested. He was thirty years old, and had a hooked nose, no eyebrows, red eyelids, a prematurely bald head, and uneven bad-coloured teeth.

"It can't be true!" he exclaimed, rubbing his eyes. Then the sleepiness which still made him yawn and stretch his thin stooping back, finally disappeared.

"Then," he said, with affected indifference, "you won't be able to take me this evening to the house of——"

"Why not? That will be all right! You dress quickly, I have a cab below, and we must hurry off to Ormel."

"Why, you don't mean to say it's serious?" he exclaimed, but in his heart of hearts he would have been very much disappointed if it had not been serious. The friendly surprise of the first shock had gone, and he wanted to smile with pleasure, for he saw the delightful importance attached to his own rôle, and did not stop to think of the less pleasant part which his friend would have to play.

"You see," Préfanier went on, "I have told you everything, but

naturally I shall not tell Alphonse that this matter has any connection with his wife. He must only know that there is some woman at the bottom of the matter."

"Poor Alphonse," smiled Jacques.

"What a fool you are!"

"I? What did I say?"

Préfanier protested that there was nothing, positively nothing, between himself and Madame Ormel. People had said this—and people had said that—and the young man took a sort of pleasure in recapitulating what people had said. "But," he concluded, "of course it is all nonsense. Besides she is too thin."

Jacques was now up and dressing with much activity, in an excellent temper. He was inwardly delighted that "that great hulking fellow Sempach" had been insulted. He was delighted that such reports were afloat about the wife of "that conceited Ormel;" but of course it would not do openly to show the malign pleasure these things gave to his sickly little mind. Several times, while brushing his few remaining hairs, he said from a sense of propriety, and not with any desire of his remark being heeded: "Are you sure all this can't be arranged amicably?"

But Préfanier, who himself needed a little re-assuring, yet insisted that reconciliation was quite impossible, he went through the dialogue of the preceding evening, raising his voice so that Jacques was obliged to ask him to speak less loudly for fear of rousing his mother, Madame Bernoir, who was possibly still asleep in the next room. Préfanier was therefore reduced to murmur through the scene of provocation: "You are a scoundrel!" "And you are the biggest scoundrel in the world."

He frowned, and made furious gestures, the matter of his remarks and their expression being in amusing contrast to the softened tone in which they were conveyed.

"What would you have done in my place?" he concluded by saying.

"I?— I should have waited to see—"

"You would have waited? You would have waited! Nonsense! What would you have *done*?" interrupted the other excitedly.

And Bernoir was fain to confess that in his place he should have

done the same, but nevertheless he added he was a man who had never struck anybody, and he even went so far as to murmur as they got into the cab : "What you compel me to do is a dangerous thing, as I am an official under government."

The young men soon drove up to the small house on the Quai de Billy where their friend Alphonse Ormel lived. He was a man of about forty, and had been their leader in all sorts of pleasures. He was a civil engineer by profession, and utilised his business aptitudes in a way which allowed him to combine pleasure with money making. He was passionately fond of all sports, and a man of the world to the backbone. He had started a company for the building of yachts, steamers, and boats of all kinds ; and he never lost an opportunity of reminding his friends that in England this noble profession may lead even to the honour of knighthood. This business notoriety had caused him to be as widely known as the most illustrious men or certain soap makers. But he had not as yet had the crowning happiness of being pointed out in the streets. He would have liked to hear people say as he passed : "Do you see that man with the ribbon in his button hole? That is M. Ormel." For he had recently been made a knight of the Legion of Honour. He was a very good fellow, hand and glove with the press, and there was never a fête, smart wedding, or grand funeral to which he was not invited.

On the arrival of his early visitors, Ormel, dressed for a journey, was just going to jump into his dog-cart, in which the groom had already placed a small portmanteau.

"Hullo," he cried, "how are you? I'm just off to Havre."

"You will have to stay here!"

"Impossible, I am wanted at the dockyard."

Préfanier whispered in his ear the magic words :

"I am going to fight Sempach. I want you to act as second."

Ormel nearly jumped for joy. Although he had already been mixed up in two affairs of the kind, which had ended in apologies being offered and accepted, duelling, when others were the principals, still appeared to him a great and splendid thing, not a little of the lustre of which was shed upon the seconds.

"My dear fellow," he exclaimed: "of course you may count upon me. Only give me time to send off a telegram. Meanwhile go in both of you. You will breakfast with us."

Préfanier blushed at the thought of being thus unexpectedly shewn into the presence of Madame Ormel.

"I am afraid," he stammered, "that I said I should be home at noon to receive some visitors."

"We shall be there in time," said the engineer, after consulting his watch, and it was always useless to contradict him on a question of number or time.

When going to his wife to tell her of their unexpected guests he assumed that air of being very busy, to which most men have recourse when they wish people to think that they are not concealing anything.

"What?" exclaimed Madame Ormel, when she saw him, "are you not gone? What has happened? What is the matter?"

"Why," said Ormel, trying to get away, "I have changed my mind. That's all."

His wife kept him with a string of troublesome questions.

"Well," he exclaimed at last, "if you must know, I am going to be second at a duel."

"For whom?"

Ormel was in a fix. He felt sure it would be wrong to tell when he had been asked by his principal not to do so, and being thus called upon to act in an affair of honour had naturally sharpened his sense of honour; so, under the fire of his wife's questions, he replied: "For Jacques Bernoir."

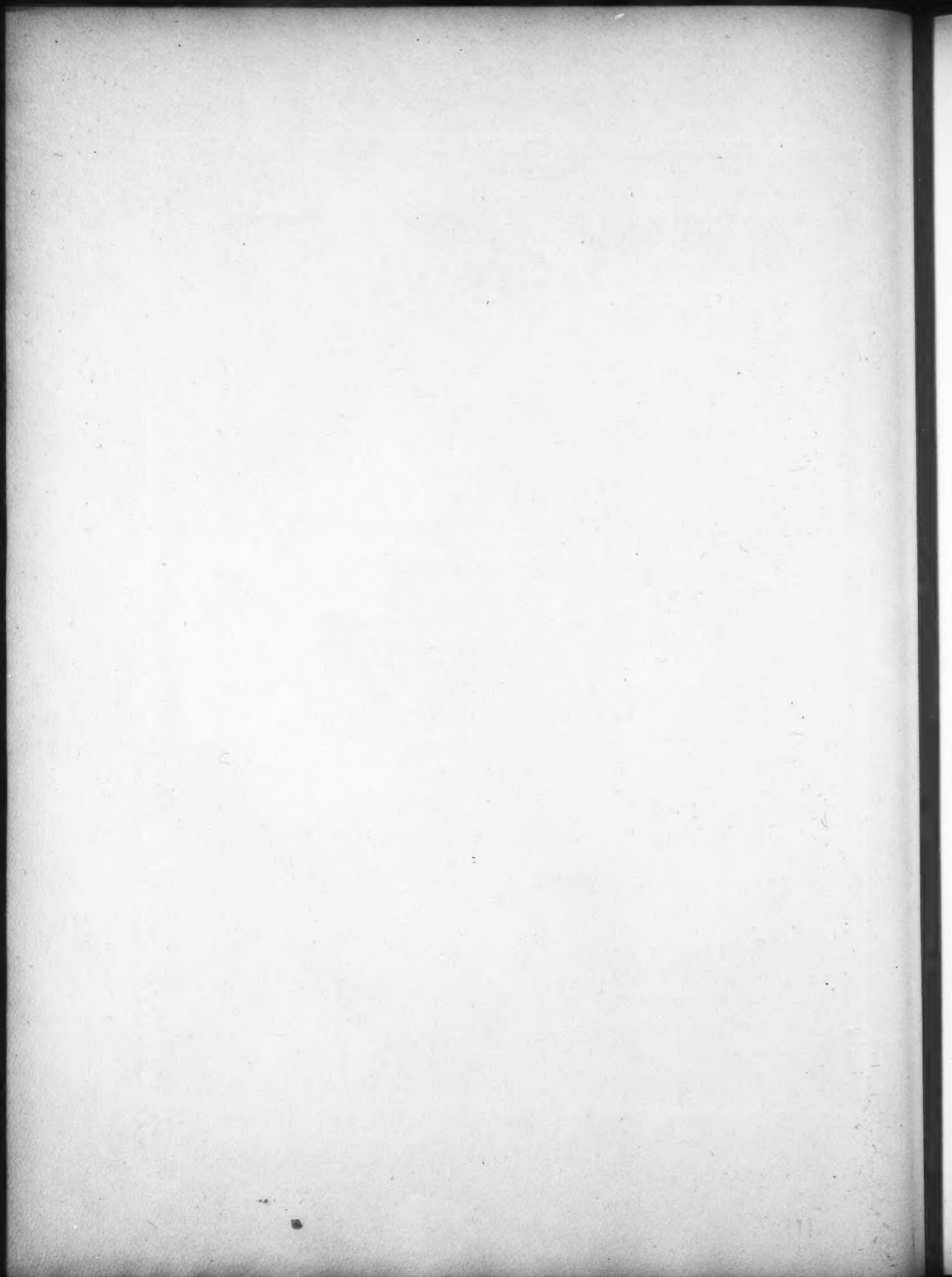
This subterfuge seemed to him ingeniously to atone for his first fault in telling about the duel.

"With whom is he going to fight?" she asked, feeling now still more interested, "and for what reason?"

But her husband pleaded complete ignorance of this, and in very fact Préfanier had not thrown very much light upon the matter.

Préfanier's heart began working like a steam engine when Mercedes entered the dining-room, in a close-fitting morning gown of brown cachemire with a scent of ambergris diffusing itself about her. It struck him





that very likely Ormel had not been able to hold his tongue, and in a sudden access of shyness he dreaded some embarrassing exhibition of sympathy.

But the young wife entered gaily, with her manner bright and unconcerned. She gave both hands to each young man in turn, and was evidently far too much occupied with herself to think of anything else.

"Look, I have left my rings upstairs," she exclaimed, looking at her fingers, her attention being called to them, doubtless, because at the moment they were the part of her person in action. "Now you are not to look at the way my hair is done," was her next exclamation, as she turned to a mirror, stretching and twisting her neck to get a view of the back of her head. Then she burst out laughing as she vainly tried to hide the ends of a curl-paper that stood out conspicuously from amid her dark hair which was fastened on the top of her head with a tortoise-shell comb. Then her pleasure at having company turned into a hospitable channel: "It is delightful of you to come and surprise us. I love such unexpected meetings, especially in the morning, when nothing is ready and everything goes wrong, and one is ugly and stupid; in fact quite one's self. It is great fun!"

Meanwhile Préfanier had recovered himself. The indifference of Madame Ormel even surpassed his desires. Evidently Ormel had told his wife nothing. That was right. Nevertheless, considering all things, perhaps it would have been better carefully to have dropped a hint—— Préfanier knew exactly how he himself would have acted in similar circumstances; but tact is such a variable quality, so peculiar to the individual—— Yet if Ormel had thought of putting his wife on her guard, of saying for instance: "Poor Préfanier is going to fight a duel," it would have set things on their proper basis and every one would have known what to do. This need not have prevented their enjoying a pleasant breakfast party, nor their talking of other things.

In spite of all the attentions lavished on him at table by the host, Préfanier remained taciturn and just a little sulky. When Madame Ormel asked him if he intended being present at a certain representation of a new play, he answered gravely: "Madame, I never make plans beforehand."

At the same time, satisfied with the modest dignity of this reply, he looked round for the approving glance of his seconds. They, however, were much occupied with their plates, but Alphonse replied munching his words with a mouthful of cutlet : "You, my dear fellow, are a wise man."

"That's quite true," cried Mercedes, clapping her hands, "I am quite sure, Monsieur Préfanier, you have never pulled off a button in putting on your boots. Don't you remember what I always say when we waltz together; whether the music goes slow or fast you always keep to your own pace."

At this raillery, which, to say the least of it, was out of place under the circumstances, Préfanier bit his lips. He was seized with a sudden and intense desire to overpower his hostess by a sudden revelation of the fact that he was on the very eve of risking his life in her defence, an honour of which she had not the least suspicion, and which she was very far from being worth.

But deceived by her husband's subterfuge, when from time to time she succeeded in fixing her wandering attention for a moment, it was upon Jacques Bernoir, not upon the real hero of the occasion. Her eyes then became quite serious in the effort to pierce through the ugly mask of the supposed duelist, and to discover in the innermost man one of those hidden and magnificent characters who are the soul of a drama.

Préfanier grew perfectly wild with jealousy. He began to think all sorts of nonsense, hoping, without seeing how this was to be brought about, that he would all of a sudden be left quite alone with Mercedes. His heart beat fast as he thought how sweet a vengeance it would be to witness, after the first shock of discovery, her vain efforts to prevent the duel. He imagined the position into which she would throw herself when entreating : "My friend, for my sake,—" and he pictured himself perfectly resolute in the face of her supplications. Then moved by the thought of the heroic dignity of his imaginary replies, he saw himself in his turn at the feet of Mercedes, murmuring forth declarations of love, permissible to one about to die. He began to grow intoxicated with these reflections, and was being rapidly led into actually falling in love with his hostess, by the simple fact of picturing himself in the act of confessing his love for her.

His boldness increased with the flights of his imagination, and before long he began to seek under the table with his foot, for that of Mercedes. The sole of his heavy boot soon came in contact with the buckle of her dainty shoe, which was quickly withdrawn.

Madame Ormel looked at him in astonishment, and her rosy lips, which were a trifle too short, and could only with an effort be closed over her teeth, were parted so that they showed at the left corner of her mouth a small gap left by an absent tooth. The young man's gaze fell on this blemish with a look of regret which was so familiar, that Mercedes, quite disconcerted, closed her mouth abruptly and a flood of Creole blood rushed through her veins. She rose, and took Bernoir's arm, although his adventure had now become quite indifferent to her, and she assumed an air of dignity, while secretly hoping that the guests would not leave, so that something else might happen between herself and Préfanier.

"My boys!" the husband exclaimed at last, "we have only just time to drink our coffee——"

* * *

Punctually at noon the three friends, installed themselves in Préfanier's rooms.

He had proved obdurate to all the efforts of the engineer to discover the true cause of the quarrel, and Ormel had been obliged to content himself with the repetition of the statement that a lady was implicated in it, without being informed as to who this lady was. While they were smoking, he began by cross-questioning Préfanier, but finding that useless, he soon turned to Bernoir, who, warned by his principal, assumed an air of false innocence. He really wished not to betray the confidence of Préfanier, but at the same time he was anxious to enjoy the dignity due to his superior amount of information.

After an awkward pause, Ormel tried to conceal his chagrin by an assumption of anxious interest.

"I am strongly of opinion," he said, "that we should begin by proclaiming that we are the offended party——"

"But,——" objected Bernoir.

"Oh! my dear fellow, I have at least more experience in these matters than you—— and I assert that this attempt has always a chance of success, and can never do any harm. Besides, I will see it through myself. What do you say, Préfanier?"

For some minutes past all Préfanier's attention had been devoted to watching the hands of the clock. His anxiety although it did not cease to increase, became, so to speak, of a milder kind, as he found time passing on, without any interruption, just like in a tunnel, as the darkness grows thicker, an increasing hope of regaining the light becomes intermingled with the normal feeling of oppression.

Suddenly a bell rang.

"Ah!" said Préfanier.

At first he made an effort to sit still; but soon his impatience grew so great, that he rose and walked on tiptoe to open the door a little way. He heard a voice at the end of the antechamber, the unknown sound of which made him tremble.

Almost immediately his valet brought in two cards, saying that the gentlemen were waiting in the reception room.

"Captain Constantinowich, the Count de Brugnans," the young man read hastily. "They can only have come for this business."

But in the confusion of his mind Préfanier still tried to find some other pretext for their visit, for which his reeling brain could give but absurd suppositions.

"By George!" said Bernoir, who had taken the cards from his friend's trembling fingers—— "Here is some writing in pencil: 'From Monsieur de Sempach.'"

"Oh! ah!" cried Ormel, his eyes glistening. "Why, the Count de Brugnans is well known for these matters—— Only the other day he was pointed out to me. Why, you fellows know him well enough! An old man who always has a little pug at his heels—— He carries his head on one side—— A handsome white-haired head—— Why, we all know him——know him well."

Préfanier murmured: "What troubles me is that he should have secured the Count de Brugnans."

At that moment everything troubled him, and it was just a chance that his wandering senses arrested themselves on this point. "But I must go and receive them," he added, entering the next room.

Ormel stood silent and thoughtful, going over in his mind the two names which had been announced. They seemed to him to sound very well; by an association of ideas he thought to himself how glad he would have been to have had his own name connected with that of some notability, a general, for instance, or a deputy, or even a good shot. But Jacques Bernoir wanted standing, physically, socially, and nominally. That fool of a Préfanier (Oh! it was too bad to speak of the poor fellow in that way); but hadn't he any acquaintance a little bit smart?

"By the way," said the engineer, with affected carelessness, "who is the woman at the bottom of all this?"

"I don't know," said Bernoir, "indeed I haven't an idea," he protested, raising his hand to his unhealthy-looking eyelids to cover his confusion.

His interlocutor of course felt at once, that this was a lie; and was inwardly enraged at not being let into the secret. In this state of mind he recalled the circumstances of the former duels in which he had been engaged, and the issue of which had been so lamentably peaceful. So he exclaimed hurriedly :

"What do you think of the feelings of our friend? Don't you think he is a little feverish? Are you sure he means to carry this affair through?"

"What do you mean by that?" replied the other, who had not been warned by past experience to consider such a possibility.

"By Jove! the question concerns us nearly enough— one can't play with such a man as de Brugnans. If for any reason Préfanier should leave us on the ground, you or I would be obliged to take up his quarrel."

"How? what do you mean?— But it is impossible! In the first place in my position under government— You must know quite well——"

Ormel stood with his hands in his pockets, apparently lost in thought. Perhaps this hypothesis which, being vexed, he had started out of pure mischief, would take definite form, which would not be pleasant. Perhaps

he hoped that Jacques would take alarm, and, retiring, give place to a more desirable person, the longed-for and imaginary general for example.

Bernoir began to feel nervous, and sorry that he had thus lightly compromised himself in the matter. He was just going to say : "Very well, if that should happen it would be your place to arrange the matter as you are the eldest," when Préfanier returned looking a trifle pale and very much moved ; but with a composed dignity which he had brought back from the other room.

"These gentlemen," he said, in a tolerably firm voice, "accept an immediate interview here, in order to avoid delay and inconvenience."

Bernoir rose with some hesitation. Ormel placed his two hands on Préfanier's shoulders, and said : "If we have the choice, we shall demand the sword, shall we not? Good. Have you any preference as to the day and hour?"

"I should rather it were Saturday."

"Very good! To-day is Thursday—— the day after to-morrow then. It is as well not to choose Friday, of course it is a silly superstition, but we may as well humour it—— Are you coming Jacques?"

Bernoir hastily put on his gloves, adjusted his eyeglass, straightened up his bent figure, and insisted that Ormel was to enter first, he himself effacing his person as much as possible behind that of his friend. It would not have required much to make him say as he entered : "Gentlemen, I beg you to understand in case of accident, that my colleague is to take the lead in everything."

Ormel, by way of a finishing touch, arranged his red ribbon to the best advantage in his button hole.

III

NEGOTIATIONS

On their entrance the Count de Brugnans bowed stiffly, only bending his head, which, according to his habit, was slightly on one side, so that his profile was turned towards the two friends. The Captain, however, made up for this by the depth of his obeisance, for he bowed till he looked as if he were made in two halves and only prevented from

falling apart by his tightly-fitting frock-coat. He was erect again in a moment.

Ormel and Bernoir overcome by this reception, got over their salutations in a hurry, for fear of keeping the others waiting. It must be confessed that their bows were a little ungainly. Bernoir caught his foot in the carpet, and made an awkward stumble, which at once put de Brugnans in a good temper, for he felt himself master of the situation. Obdurate as regards his opinions, when he was set face to face with an equal, he became quite indulgent towards neophytes, and at heart he was of the tribe of those good-natured fellows in whom a promise of ten louis will give rise to quite a revolution of opinion.

For some moments, expressions of politeness, and thanks for courtesy were alone exchanged, and that each should take the most comfortable chair, became a matter of solicitude.

When at last all were comfortably seated, the old man, after a brief silence, undertook the part of spokesman, and began : "With gentlemen like yourselves, sirs, our task is no longer painful."

The gentlemen in question bowed gravely; having recovered from the first shock of meeting, they were now ready to support their rights, and carry out their duties, and they gradually grew more at their ease in an atmosphere of politeness, which seemed something more than the ordinary oxygen.

The Count continued : "You are aware, gentlemen, of the object of our visit, and like us, you are doubtless of opinion that any attempt at reconciliation would be vain——"

He paused for a moment as if to allow the others to propose some project. They, however, by a simultaneous gesture, assented to the proposition made, as if it had their most cordial adherence. They even felt a passing wish verbally to express their entire approbation of the sentiments put forward. Perhaps it is a phenomenon based on the natural principle of contrast, to establish a sort of equilibrium, that those who are negotiating the preliminaries of a duel, which is to set loose the savage instinct of primitive man, maintain a polished and even excessive politeness throughout the proceedings. Perhaps, however, the extreme

politeness may arise from the knowledge that one is witnessing an unpleasant result of ill-considered speech.

The Count de Brugnans in all these preambles excelled himself in the effort to exercise the greatest courtesy and delicacy that might be expected from a man of so terrible a reputation as that with which he was favoured. He spoke with his eyes half-closed, as calm as we might imagine the patriarch Isaac to have been, when he judged between his sons Esau and Jacob :

"I presume you do not contest the point that M. de Sempach is the offended party?"

Ormel's hasty assent was interrupted by an equivocal glance from Bernoir.

"Ah, pardon me!" he said, feeling furious with Bernoir for having so inconveniently reminded him of a promise given without due consideration, and angry with himself for the friendly impulse which had led him to suggest it. The Count, by a benevolent gesture, intimated his free permission for Ormel to proceed.

Captain Constantinowich confined himself to making a graceful movement of surprise.

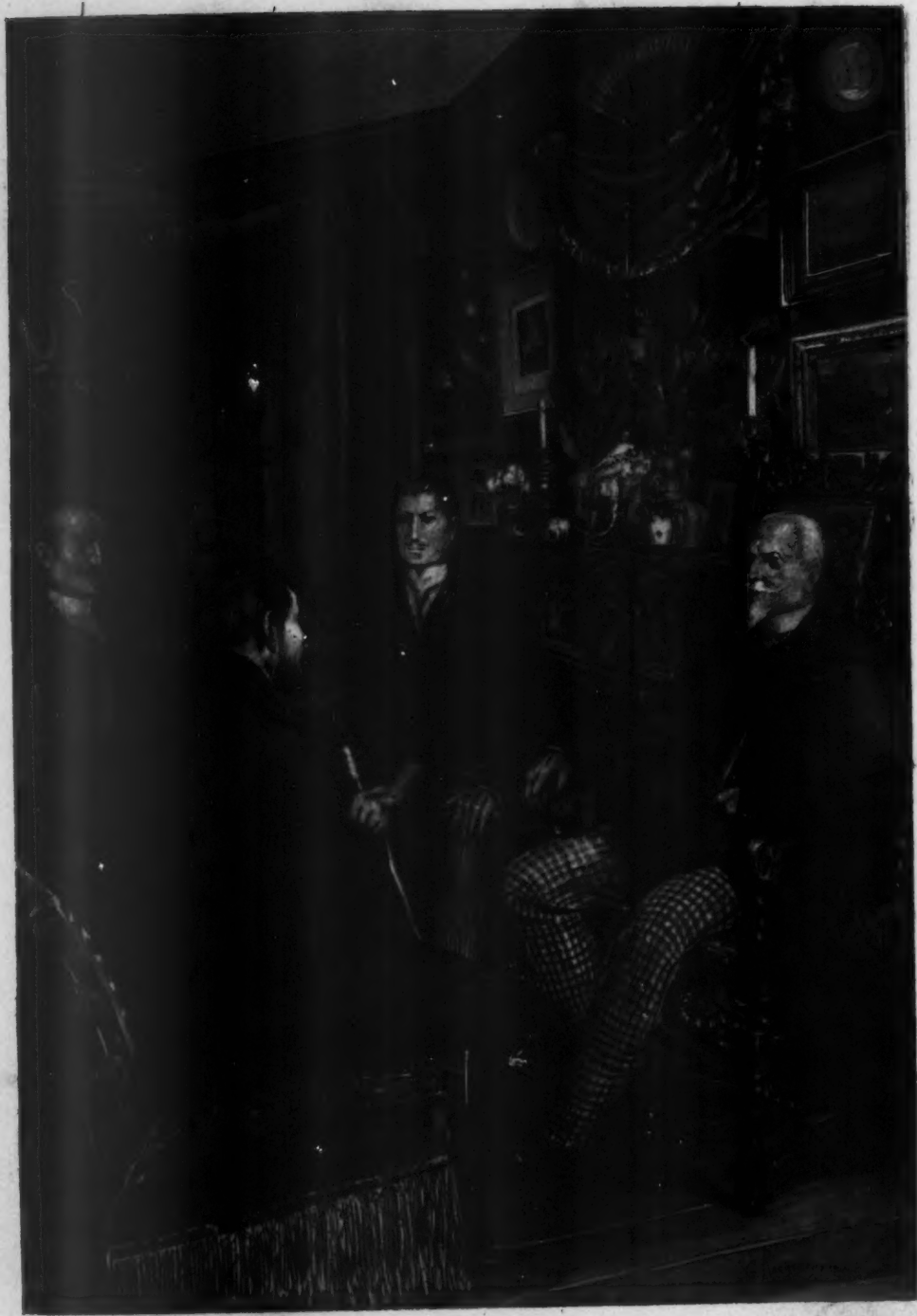
Ormel began by explaining that he did not wish to go back to the origin of the quarrel because of its private nature.

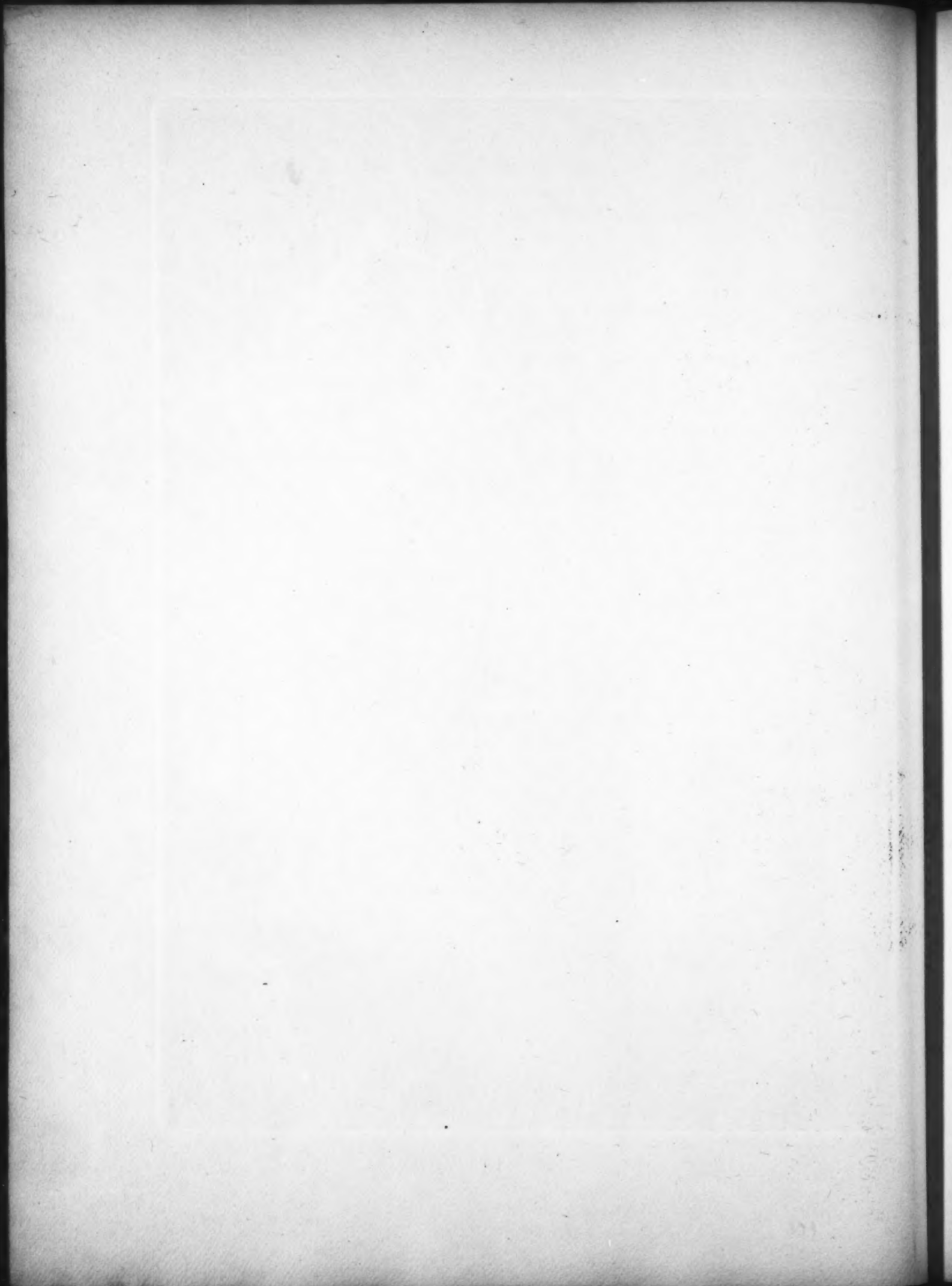
"Like us you are aware," he said with a knowing air, "that the honour of a certain person—— of a lady, in fact, is concerned—— the honour of a lady of position," he repeated, uttering the phrase as if by emphasising it he were able to satisfy his own curiosity.

Sempach's seconds pretended to be fully aware of what all this was about; but Bernoir, scenting danger from afar, confined himself to gazing stolidly at the ceiling, as if, like a well brought up person, who is ignorant of what is going on, he were unwilling to appear to seek for information.

"Let us confine ourselves then," went on the engineer, "to the public incidents of the affair."

"Certainly," said de Brugnans who was playing with the ring on his finger. "You see, when a woman is at the bottom of the business——"





But he did not finish the remark, and Ormel proceeded to go carefully over the scene in the café. "You are a scoundrel." "It is you who are a scoundrel!" "Scoundrel! Scoundrel!" "The biggest scoundrel in the world!" Then the push, followed immediately by the blow.

Undoubtedly, Sempach must have given exactly the same account of the affair as Préfanier; for the Count and the Captain bowed their assent to each point in the narrative. Ormel in his extreme politeness was most careful in speaking of the Count's principal with exaggerated courtesy, while he took no such pains with regard to his own principal whom he treated cavalierly enough.

"Consequently it seems to me," he concluded, "that the first offence was offered to M. Préfanier."

As Brugnans and Constantinowich did not deny this, Ormel thought he had won the day, and he felt half-ashamed that their generosity should have exceeded his own. But de Brugnans, in his turn, began to describe the course of events. Although the text was the same, and he made use of the identical terms, he sometimes mixed up the names of the heroes, and consequently the parts respectively played by them; which several times nearly led the Captain to interfere and put matters straight. But Bernoir and Ormel, by their air of polite attention, and little gestures of assent, indicated that it was of no importance. Besides was it their place to contradict statements in which their client was placed in a far more advantageous light than his rival?

Finally the Count came to this conclusion: "There can therefore be no doubt that M. de Sempach was the injured party."

To insist in the face of such a statement would have been almost insulting, and Préfanier's seconds bowed, declaring themselves vanquished, convinced, and won over to his point of view.

The old man was touched by this deference and murmured: "We demand the sword."

And emulating the others' politeness, he looked at Ormel with a benign expression, as much as to say, "Would you have preferred any other weapon, my dear sir?"

At this point Bernoir did not see why he should be left out in the

cold, so he hazarded an opinion, which he had formerly heard expressed by competent judges.

"The pistol," he said, "is always either brutal or ridiculous."

The old Count could not share this opinion; a charming air of melancholy pervaded his face, and his eyes became fixed in a beautiful dream, which carried him back to the happy days of his youth, when he had been the petted and envied second in duels where the pistol was the chosen weapon.

Ormel instantly seized this passing expression, seeing the two-fold opportunity of pleading a cause in which he was in sympathy, and of giving a little lesson to his provoking partner.

"I will admit that the pistol may be brutal," he said, "but it is never ridiculous. Let us get rid of this hackneyed phrase once and for all. Is the soldier who returns unwounded from the field of battle, ridiculous? Nevertheless, he has not had to stand straight, still, and patient, like a willing target waiting for an enemy thirty paces off to shoot at him. No, the soldier is not laughed at if he should return without a wound, not even if he has taken refuge behind an earthwork or a tree from an enemy who was perhaps a quarter of a mile away. Then, how can one dare to ridicule those who submit to the far more severe laws of single combat?"

"Good! very good," interjected the old Count by nods of his head; and Captain Constantinowich allowed a benevolent smile to appear on his face, a smile evidently intended to mark the attractions of the pistol.

Bernoir mumbled confusedly, anxious to excuse himself for his stupid intervention: "Oh! I have no personal dislike to duels with pistols."

Brugnans for his part thought he understood, from the opinion expressed in Ormel's remarks about fire-arms, a desire to repudiate the choice of swords, and as the right of choice had been conceded to him he hastened to show that he did not wish to take any undue advantage of this generous concession.

"Well, gentlemen," he said accordingly, "after having thoroughly considered the matter it appears to me that the grounds of offence are so delicate, and that it is so difficult to decide who is in the right and

who in the wrong, that I do not see why our principals should not fight with the pistol if you consider it desirable."

The wish to oblige was very evident in this proposition, and once more Ormel and Bernoir did not like to appear behindhand in courtesy, so by a slight shrug of the shoulders they indicated that they could see no objection which might have escaped the great specialist.

"Then it is to be the pistol?"

The choice of this weapon was thus decided, also that the first shot was to be fired at twenty-five paces at the word of command.

"That is a very good distance," said the old Count.

"The very best," said Bernoir with conviction.

Ormel proposed that only two balls should be exchanged.

The Count and the Captain cast glances of enquiry at each other and then replied: "Very well! two balls."

These conditions having been thus arranged to the satisfaction of all present, other points still remained to be settled.

"What day do you propose?" said Ormel in quite a friendly way.

Brugnans then confusedly remembered the injunction as to date laid upon him by his principal: "The day after to-morrow, gentlemen, if you have no objection."

"Very good, gentlemen, on Saturday then?"

"Should you have preferred to-morrow?"

"No! and you?"

"Oh! no, not at all! Then is it to be the day after to-morrow?"

"Or to-morrow?"

On this there was a murmur from the four sides of the room, from the four gentlemen who all vied with each other in their anxiety to be the most courteous, and it was rather an echo than the voice of any one of them which finally pronounced the last syllables of the appointment, "to-morrow!"

After which the four seconds, calm in the inward conviction of having played their parts creditably, their minds relieved and once more breathing freely, drew up a statement to the effect that, after having vainly tried every means to effect a reconciliation, a meeting had been arranged to

take place the next day at one p.m. on the bank of the river at Sârtrouville, the pistol being the chosen weapon.

Captain Constantinowich had only indicated his presence by signing this document, and appending a monumental flourish to his signature, on which, owing to the mutual need of expressing cordial feelings, he was very much complimented.

Then everybody bowed affably, with only a trace of ceremony, which but faintly recalled the forced coldness of the first salutations. Almost warm hand-clasps followed, which expressed the satisfaction of all present. There were mutual congratulations on having made each other's acquaintance, and promises that, whatever might be the result of the duel as far as the principals were concerned, the seconds would none the less maintain a cordial relationship, and retain a pleasant recollection of this meeting.

During this long conference, Préfanier, with his ear glued to the crack of the door, had vainly attempted to follow the course of the conversation. He was nearly driven wild by the silence and loneliness.

On their return, in face of his tragic bearing, the two friends hastened to suppress the remains of the pleasant smiles with which their lips had been wreathed.

"Well, old fellow! it is all settled," said Ormel brushing his silk hat with his elbow.

"Ah!"

Although this information was anything but explicit, Préfanier perfectly well understood that it was the meeting which had been settled. He had expected it, and knew it was inevitable, but still he felt moved at the announcement.

Bernoir, haunted by the idea that his principal might wish to withdraw from the affair, endeavoured to procure a reaction :

"Come, come," he said, "it's all a joke, so let's treat it as a joke."

And he made an effort to laugh.

Préfanier was shocked, or rather astonished at this apparent gaiety. How was it possible for any one to laugh?

But he succeeded in mastering himself, and without waiting to hear what terms had been arranged, he mechanically uttered the question : "Did not they raise any objections?"

"None at all. Everything went as if on wheels—— only, my dear fellow, the pistol is the chosen weapon."

"What!—— But I had told you—— but—— the devil!"

Préfanier threw himself into a chair, he could stand it no longer, he was choking with long-suppressed fury which had now found a pretext on which to vent itself.

Ormel and Bernoir, feeling very uncomfortable, tried to explain the causes which had led to the abandonment of the sword as the chosen weapon ; but they failed signally in finding a sufficient reason. In order to exculpate themselves, they declared with one accord :

"The other side demanded it—— With this exception, however, we must acknowledge that those gentlemen were all that could be desired."

Préfanier, after a series of furious gestures, sat still, quite overcome! This behaviour soon wore out the patience of the other two, who, during the preceding interview which had lasted three quarters of an hour, had expended an amount of amiability far greater than the average which is fixed by the law of economy of sentiment. Some compensation was needed, and, authorised by their long-standing and intimate relations with their friend, they felt at liberty to escape from the bonds of politeness by which they had been fettered in the presence of the Count de Brugnans and Captain Constantinowich.

"Oh," cried Bernoir, "if you wanted to retain the choice of arms, you should not have allowed him to be the offended party."

"Yes," said the engineer, "whatever made you strike him?"

Préfanier sat with his face buried in his hands and exclaimed miserably : "Why, you yourself, Bernoir, told me this morning that you could not have done otherwise. Didn't you say that?"

"That was only to make you give me a moment's peace—— You kept on worrying me by saying : 'What would you have done in my place?' At any rate I shouldn't have been such a fool as you."

"Quite true," said Alphonse, "when one has done a foolish thing,

one is always anxious to be convinced that it was a sensible action."

Préfanier was not listening, he was mechanically twisting his moustachios between his nervous fingers and murmuring in a stupid, stunned sort of way :

"It is to be with pistols ; I am done for !"

At last Ormel, exasperated and touched in his pride as second, exclaimed brutally :

"If you were to be done for, the sword would have served your turn as well as the pistol."

"No—no—no !" Préfanier protested, repeating his words like a child, "I wanted the sword, I wanted the sword ! I——"

Bernoir laid his hand on his shoulder, and looking at him affectionately made an appeal to his sense of friendship :

"Listen ! this is not kind towards us who have done our very best."

"Leave him alone," said Ormel, "I wish he had been in our place, he would have seen how he would have got out of the mess, the great fool !"

Under the double influence of these divers admonitions, Préfanier regained a little mastery over himself.

"Pardon me !" he sighed, offering both his hands, "Thank you ! I will see to the rest, engage the doctor and the carriage."

The three men urged by a common impulse of affection embraced each other.

At bottom they were really fond of each other ; but with regard to all things here below, of course every one has his own point of view.

"It must be a big landau, mustn't it ?" said Ormel—— "With good horses, and we must leave here at mid-day to-morrow."

"What !" exclaimed Préfanier, "to-morrow ? I said it was to be Saturday !"

This time the seconds shrugged their shoulders as much as to say : "For mercy's sake don't begin again !" Again he felt a return of his impotent rage, and a desire to give up everything, and leave Paris, but he resolutely controlled himself. After this he felt a sense of comfort arise in his heart. He became satisfied as to his own courage, of which

he had inwardly entertained painful doubts, and which now rehabilitated itself in his eyes, by overcoming the memories of past mishaps.

Going down-stairs, Bernoir said to Ormel : "Don't you think a surgeon would be better than a physician? You know, with the pistol——"

"Oh! I shouldn't advise you to go up again about that. Our poor friend takes everything so badly just now. Perhaps he will think of it himself. And if not, we can find plenty of surgeons when we come back into Paris, as many as one could desire."

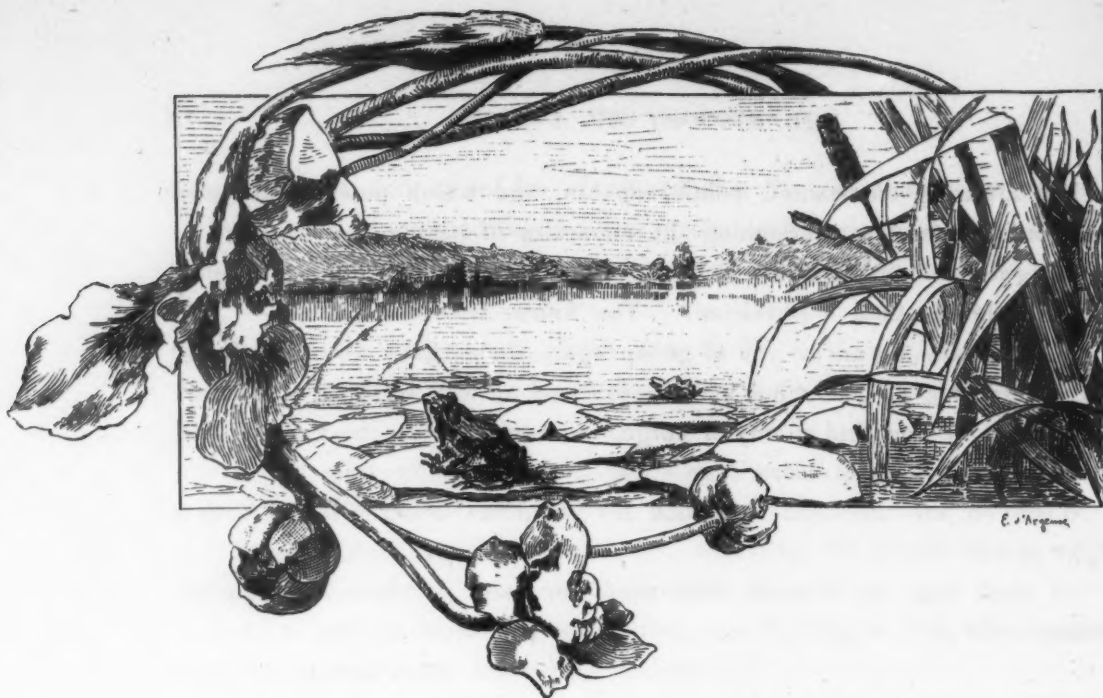
When on the threshold he shook his shoulders under his coat with a slight shiver :

"I shall take an overcoat with me," he said. "You know in the country——"

PAUL HERVIEU.

(To be continued.)





CANZONET

I have no store
Of gryphon-guarded gold;
Now, as before,
Bare is the shepherd's fold.
Rubies, nor pearls,
Have I to gem thy throat;
Yet woodland girls
Have loved the shepherd's note.

Then, pluck a reed
And bid me sing to thee,
For I would feed
Thine ears with melody,
Who art more fair
Than fairest fleur-de-lys,
More sweet and rare
Than sweetest ambergris.



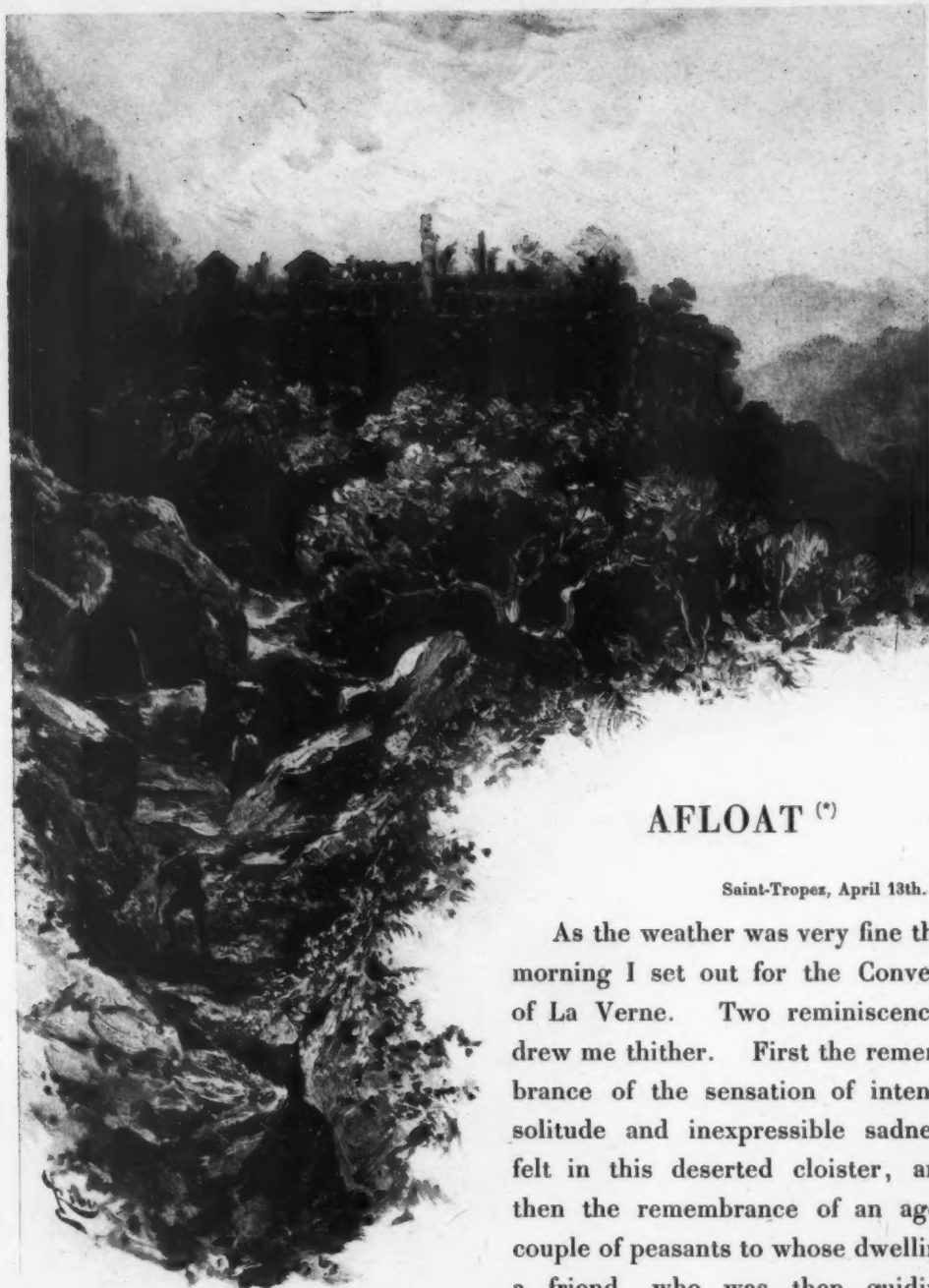


What dost thou fear?
Young Hyacinth is slain,
Pan is not here,
And will not come again.
No hornèd Faun
Treads down the yellow leas,
No God at dawn
Steals through the olive trees.

Hylas is dead,
Nor will he e'er divine
Those little red
Rose-petalled lips of thine.
On the high hill
No ivory Dryads play,
Silver and still
Sinks the sad autumn day.

OSCAR WILDE.





AFLOAT (*)

Saint-Tropez, April 13th.

As the weather was very fine this morning I set out for the Convent of La Verne. Two reminiscences drew me thither. First the remembrance of the sensation of intense solitude and inexpressible sadness felt in this deserted cloister, and then the remembrance of an aged couple of peasants to whose dwelling a friend, who was then guiding

me through the country of the Moors, led me last year.

Seated in a *char à bancs*, the only kind of vehicle which can traverse the impracticable road which we shall shortly reach, I, at first, follow the

(*) See *Art and Letters* for February and March 1888, vol. I, pages 192 and 241.

gulf to the end. On the shore opposite, I can see the pine woods where the "Company" is still trying to establish a station. Afterwards the road buries itself among the mountains, and soon passes through the town of Cogolin. A little further on, I leave the highway, to take a broken road resembling a long trench. A river, or rather a large brook, flows alongside, and every hundred yards or so cuts this ravine, inundates it, bears off a little, comes back, is again mistaken, quits its bed and floods the road, then falls into a ditch, loses itself in a field of stones, and all at once appears to become steadier and follows its proper course for some time; but, seized abruptly by a sudden fancy, it precipitates itself again into the road converting it into a pool, into which we sink, the horse up to his breast, and the lofty vehicle up to its body.

There are no more houses, only now and again a charcoal burner's hut. The poorest of these people live in holes. Do we ever picture to ourselves that men live in holes, that they live there all through the year, chopping wood and burning it to obtain charcoal; eating bread and onions, drinking water only; and lying down, like rabbits in burrows, at the end of a narrow cavern scooped out of the granite?

Quite recently they discovered, among these unexplored valleys, a hermit, a true hermit, who had been hiding there for the last thirty years, unknown to all, even to the foresters. The existence of this recluse, revealed I do not know by whom, was no doubt pointed out to the conductor of the coach, who probably spoke of it to the post-master, who, in turn, may have chatted about it to the director or directress of the telegraph, who perhaps reported this astounding news to the editor of some *Petit Midi* or other newspaper, in which it formed the subject of a sensational article, which was reproduced in all the papers of Provence.

Some of the gendarmerie started off and visited this lonely misanthrope, without disturbing him however,—a fact which would seem to argue that his credentials were ready and satisfactory. By and by a photographer aroused by the news set out, in his turn, wandered three whole days and nights over the mountains, and finished by photographing some one, the true hermit, say some, quite another individual, say others.

Now, last year, the friend who introduced me to this singular country,

showed me two beings more curious assuredly than the poor wretch who had come to hide, in these dense woods, some grief, remorse, or incurable despair, or who came hither perhaps from mere weariness of life.

This is how he found them. Wandering on horseback across these valleys, he unexpectedly arrived at a farm-house, humble but habitable, with thriving vines and fields around. He entered the house, where he was received by a peasant woman about seventy years of age. Her husband, seated under a tree, rose and came forward and saluted him.

"He is deaf," the woman said.

He was a tall old man of eighty years, astonishingly strong, erect, and handsome. To wait on them they had two servants, a man and a woman.

My friend, somewhat surprised at meeting, in this out-of-the-way place, such singular beings, made enquiries about them, and learnt that they had been there a very long time, that they were much respected, and supposed to be pretty well off for peasants.

He paid them several visits, and gradually became the confidant of the old woman. He brought her papers and books, surprised to find in her ideas, or rather relics of ideas, which did not seem to belong to her class. She was not, however, learned, or quick, or specially intelligent, but seemed to have, at the bottom of her memory, traces of almost forgotten thoughts, the sleeping remembrance of a former education.

One day she asked him his name.

"I am Count X.," he replied.

Stirred by one of those obscure vanities which seem to be hidden away in all souls, she rejoined : "I also am noble."

Then she went on talking, doubtless for the first time, of her youth, of a position so long abandoned, and unsuspected by all around :

"I am a colonel's daughter. My husband was a non-commissioned officer in the regiment that my father commanded. I fell in love with him, and we ran away."

"And came here?"

"Yes, to hide ourselves."

"And you never saw your family afterwards?"

"No."

"Have you never had tidings of any of your family, nor of your father, nor of your mother?"

"No, my mother had already died when I left home."

The woman still preserved something girlish in her ways; that innocent air of those who throw themselves heedlessly into love, as over a precipice.

"Have you never told any one of this?" he again asked.

"No. I can tell you now, because Maurice is deaf. So long as he could hear, I dared not speak of it. And, besides, I have never seen anyone but peasants since I came here."

"Have you at least been happy?"

"Yes, I have. He made me very happy. I have had nothing to regret."

In my turn I had been the previous year to see this woman, or rather this couple, as one might go to see some wonderful relic.

Saddened, surprised, and almost shocked, I had often since thought of this daughter who had followed this man, this rustic, seduced by his gay hussar uniform, and who, ever after, had continued to see him, under his peasant rags, with the blue dollman on his shoulder, the sword by his side, booted and spurred.

She had eventually become a peasant herself. In the midst of this desert she had grown habituated to a life without charms, without luxury, without refinement of any sort; she had conformed to its simple customs. She still loved him. For him she had become a woman of the people, in cap and cotton skirt. She ate from an earthen plate, seated on a straw chair, at a bare wooden table, a stew of bacon, potatoes and cabbage. She slept on a straw mattress by his side.

She had never thought of anything—but him! In her mind arose no regrets for the ornaments, apparel, and elegances of her youth, nor for cushioned seats, nor for warm and perfumed rooms hung with tapestry, nor for the comforts of feather beds into which we sink softly for repose. He was everything to her; provided he was near her, she desired nothing more.

She had abandoned her girlhood, and the world, and those who had reared and loved her. She had come alone with him into this savage

ravine. He had been all in all to her, all that she cared for, all that she dreamt of : around him alone her hopes had always gathered. His love had filled the entire measure of her existence and happiness ; and her happiness was complete.

I was now, for the second time, going to see her, conscious however that the interest with which I regarded her was mingled with a vague contempt.

She was living on the other side of the hill on which stands the Convent of La Verne, near the Hyères road, where another conveyance awaited me ; for the hollow that we had followed ceased suddenly and became a simple path, accessible only to foot-passengers and mules.

On foot and alone I began slowly to ascend. I was in a delightful forest, a true Corsican *maquis*, a fairy-tale wood of flowering creepers, aromatic plants with powerful perfumes, and grand, lofty trees.

The granite with which the path was strewn glittered and rolled under my feet, and through the open spaces between the branches of the trees, I saw wide, sombre valleys extending as far as the eye could reach, covered with verdure.

My blood, warmed and quickened by the exercise, coursed through my veins, pulsating in rapid, exhilarated measures, and inspiring me like a gay and lively song. I was joyous, and felt buoyant, and I hurried on, scaling the rocks, sometimes leaping, sometimes running, and discovering every minute a wider stretch of country, a gigantic series of deserted valleys, from which not a single roof sent up its thread of smoke.

At last I gained the summit, still looked down upon by other loftier summits, and after some windings I saw on the side of the mountain opposite, behind an immense grove of chestnut trees stretching from the top of the valley to the bottom, a black ruin, a gloomy mass of stones and old buildings, supported on lofty arcades. In order to get there I had to skirt a wide ravine and cross the chestnut grove. The trees, as old as the abbey, still survive its decay,—gigantic, some mutilated, some dying. Many have fallen, no longer able to support their age, others, decapitated, have only a hollow trunk, often capacious enough to conceal ten or a dozen men. And like the fabled army of giants of old, though struck by thunder-bolts, they still appear to ascend to the assault of

heaven. In this fantastic wood, where nought now flourishes, at the foot of these colossal trees, one feels himself surrounded by mouldiness, by the old life of the decayed roots, and by the centuries. Between the grey trunks is a hard soil of stones, in which grows a thin, scanty grass.

Two springs are here led into basins for the use of cattle.

I approach the abbey and glance at all the old buildings, of which the most ancient date from the eleventh century, and the most modern are inhabited by a family of shepherds.

In the outer court we see, by the traces of animals, that something of life still haunts these places; then, after crossing crumbling halls—like those of any other ruin—we arrive at a long, low cloister, a walk still covered, surrounding a court-yard of brambles and tall plants. Nowhere in the world have I felt such a weight of melancholy as in this ancient and gloomy walk of the monks. Certainly the form of the arcades and the proportions of the place contribute to this feeling, to this depression, and sadden the soul through the eye, as the happy outline of a cheerful building gladdens the sight. The man who built this retreat must have been bereft of all hope, to have been able to conceive and design such a promenade of desolation.

Within these walls it is difficult to withstand a morbid sensitiveness which disposes us to sadness, even to tears, and which impels us to open the most painful wounds of our heart, to intensify all the griefs compressed within us.

I climbed through a breach to see the landscape outside, and then I understood the cause of this depression—nothing around us, nothing but death. Behind the abbey, a mountain ascending to the heavens, around the ruins the chestnut grove, and in front a valley;—beyond, other valleys, and pines, and pines, a sea of pines, and away to the horizon, summits still covered with pines. Then I left the place, with a dread of being surprised there by sudden darkness.

Afterwards I passed through a wood of cork-oaks, where the year before I had had a strange, unpleasant experience.

This was on a raw day in October, just as the woodmen had stripped off from these trees the bark from which we get our corks. The trees

are despoiled in this way from the ground up to the first branches, and the denuded trunk becomes red, blood-red, like a flayed limb. They have curious, distorted forms, and look like lame, epileptic beings writhing in agony; and I fancied myself as having been suddenly thrown into a wood of tormented creatures, in a forest of the infernal regions, where the bodies of men, deformed by tortures, had assumed the form of trees, where life was flowing incessantly in unending suffering, through these recent wounds; and I felt that thrill and swooning, which the sight of blood produces on the nervous, such as the unexpected meeting with a man who has been run over or who has fallen from a height. The emotion was so keen, the sensation was so strong, that I fancied I heard in the distance innumerable groans, and heart-rending cries; and having touched one of these trees, to dispel the illusion, I thought I saw my hand, as I turned it towards me—I *did* see it—reddened.

Now they have recovered—and are ready for the next flaying.

But, at length, I see the road which passes by the farm-house, in which the life-long happiness of the non-commissioned officer of hussars and the colonel's daughter has been sheltered.

From a distance I recognize the man walking about among his vines. So much the better : his wife will be alone in the house.

The woman-servant is washing clothes in front of the door.

"Is your mistress here?" I asked.

With a strange look, and in a southern accent, she replied : "No, sir, she has been dead these six months."

"Dead?"

"Yes, sir."

"What caused her death?"

The woman hesitated, then repeated : "She is dead,—she is dead, sir."

"But of what did she die?"

"Of a fall."

"How did that happen?"

"From a window."

I gave her a trifle.

"Tell me all about it," I said to her.

It was evident that she wished to tell me, and also that she must have told the story very often during the past six months, for she recited it at full length, as something she knew by heart and which was to be repeated ever without variation.

Then I learnt that for thirty years the old, deaf man had had a mistress in the neighbouring village, and that his wife having heard of this, by chance, from a passing waggoner, who spoke of it in ignorance of her interest in the matter, had rushed to the loft, maddened and shrieking, and had thrown herself out of window, not perhaps of set purpose, but driven by the terrible blow of this revelation, before which she fled as from a scourge which wounds and lacerates. She climbed the staircase, dashed through the doorway, and, unable to arrest her impetuous flight, had leapt from the window.

He knew nothing of it, and did not even now; he might never know, as he was so deaf. His wife was dead, that was all. Everybody must die! I could see him at some distance giving orders by signs to the workmen.

But the carriage was waiting for me beneath a tree, and I returned to Saint-Tropez.

April 14th.

I was on the point of going to bed last night, although it was scarcely nine o'clock, when a telegram was handed to me.

A friend, one of those I like, sent me the following message: "I am at Monte-Carlo for four days, and am sending telegrams to you to all the ports along the coast. Come and see me here!"

Immediately I was inflamed with an ardent desire to see him, to chat, laugh, and talk about people and things, and the affairs of the world in general; to exchange criticisms, enquiries, and conjectures; but, above all things, to talk. Yesterday morning, I should have been annoyed with such a summons, but last night I was delighted with it. Already I wished to be with him, to see the large room of the restaurant full of people, to hear that murmur of voices, above which the loud calling out

of the figures of the roulette is always heard, like the *Dominus vobis cum* of the church service.

I called Bernard.

"We shall start about four in the morning for Monaco," I said.

He added philosophically : "If it's fine, sir."

"It will be fine."

"But the barometer's going down."

"Never mind that. It will go up again."

The sailor smiled incredulously.

I went to bed and slept soundly. I was, however, the first to wake, and I called the men. It was dull, a few clouds were overhead. The barometer had been steadily falling.

The two sailors shook their heads, with a dubious look.

"We shall have it fine," I repeated. "Let's get off."

"When I can see all around, sir, I know what I'm doing," said Bernard, "but shut up here in this port, at the end of the gulf, one knows nothing, sir; you can't see. There might be a raging sea outside, and we know nothing of it."

I replied : "The barometer has gone down, so we shall not get any east wind. And if we get a west wind, we can run into Agay, which is only half a dozen miles from here."

The men did not seem easy. However they got ready to start.

"Shall we haul the canoe on board?" asked Bernard.

"No, we shall have it fine, you see. Let her tow astern."

A quarter of an hour later, we were passing out of the gulf with a fitful, light breeze. I laughed, and said : "Well, you see, it's fine."

We soon passed the tower which marks the shoal of La Moutte, and although protected by Cape Camarat which stretches out to sea, in the distance, and whose revolving light appeared at short intervals, the *Bel-Ami* was already lifted by long, slow, yet powerful waves, hills of water succeeding each other noiselessly and leisurely, without foam, menace or anger, terrible by their very calmness.

We could see nothing, we could only feel the rise and fall of the yacht on this rolling, darksome sea.

Bernard said : "They've had it rough out at sea last night, sir. We shall be lucky if there's none left for us."

Day was dawning bright upon the surging crowd of waves, and all three of us were scanning the horizon to see if we were likely to be overtaken by a squall. However, with wind and tide both favourable, the boat made good progress, and we were already off Agay, deliberating as to whether we should steer for Cannes, in case of bad weather, or for Nice, keeping away from the islands.

Bernard was in favour of going to Cannes, but as the breeze did not freshen, I decided on Nice.

For three hours, all went well, although the poor little yacht went up and down like a cork in this deep, rolling surge.

Those who have not been thus far out at sea, and beheld the mountainous waves which roll by rapidly and resistlessly, separated by valleys which are filled up and reformed every second incessantly, cannot dream or suspect what mysterious, terrible, awe-inspiring force dwells in these masses of water.

In this liquid dancing chaos, our little boat was following us at some distance, towed by a rope some forty yards in length. It would abruptly disappear almost every moment, then it would come as suddenly into view again, on the top of a wave, swimming like some great white bird.

Cannes is yonder at the end of the gulf, and there is Saint-Honorat with its tower standing in the waves, and right before us the Cape of Antibes! The breeze is steadily freshening, and the snowy, fleecy crests of the waves do now indeed look like sheep,—the *moutons* of the French mariner,—the countless flock driven by no shepherd or dog, but which speed along over the boundless pasturage.

Bernard said to me : "It's as much as we shall do to get to Antibes."

In fact the waves were now furiously breaking over the yacht, with an indescribable noise. We reel before the sudden gusts, and are precipitated into the gaping troughs, from which, however, we rise and right ourselves again, though with a terrible shaking.

The gaff is lowered, but the boom, at each oscillation of the yacht, touches the water, and seems about to tear out the mast, which will

then instantly disappear with its sail, and leave us drifting helplessly on this furious water.

Bernard cries : "The canoe, sir!"

I look round. An enormous wave at that moment swamps the little boat, turns it over, and buries it for a time; then sweeps it along like a vanquished prey, which in a short time, it will cast up on those rocks there at the cape. The minutes seem hours. Nothing remains for us but to run before the blast; we must make the point if possible, and then we shall be safe. At last we reach it! Here the sea is comparatively calm and smooth, sheltered by the long tongue of land and rocks forming the Cape of Antibes.

There is the port from which we started so recently, although I seem to have been voyaging for months; and we enter it at mid-day.

The sailors are joyous at their return home, although Bernard repeats now and then : "Ah! sir, our poor little canoe! It makes my heart ache to have lost it like that!"

I then take the four o'clock train, to go and dine with my friend in the principality of Monaco.

I should like to have the opportunity of speaking at some length on the condition and affairs of this surprising State, smaller in size than a village of France, but possessing an absolute sovereign, bishops, an army of Jesuits and seminarists more numerous than the Prince's army, an artillery with rifled cannon, an etiquette more ceremonious than that of his late Majesty Louis XIV, with principles of government more despotic than those of William of Prussia, and yet with a sublime tolerance of the vices of humanity, upon which thrive sovereign, bishops, Jesuits, seminarists, ministers, army, magistrature, everybody.

Let us, however, salute this good, pacific Prince who, without fear of invasion or revolution, reigns in peace over his happy little people, in the midst of ceremonies of a court in which are preserved intact the traditions of the four reverences, the twenty-six kissings of hands, and all the formulas practised of yore before the Great Rulers.

The monarch, however, is neither vindictive nor bloodthirsty, and





when he banishes, for he does banish sometimes, his decree is applied in a most lenient manner.

Must we give proofs of this? On a day of ill-luck, an obstinate player insulted the sovereign, and was formally expelled from the State.

For a month or so, he prowled around this forbidden paradise. At last he grew bold, crossed the frontier, in thirty seconds reached the heart of the country, and entered the Casino. But thereupon an official stopped him, and asked : "Are you not banished, sir?"

"Yes, sir, but I am going back by the first train."

"Oh! in that case, all right, sir; you can go in."

And every week he returns, and each time the same functionary puts the same question to him, to which he replies in the same set terms.

But, not many years ago, a very grave and quite unprecedented event occurred in the territory. A murder was committed. A man—a native of Monaco, and not one of those wandering foreigners that we meet in legions on these shores—in a fit of passion killed his wife! He killed her without any extenuating circumstance or acceptable pretext. There was but one opinion on the matter throughout the principality.

The Supreme Court met to try this remarkable case, for never before had so grave a crime been perpetrated there, and the wretch was unanimously condemned to death.

The indignant sovereign confirmed the sentence.

The only thing now was to execute the criminal, and a difficulty arose, for the country possessed neither executioner nor guillotine.

What was to be done? By the advice of the Minister of Foreign Affairs the Prince opened negotiations with the French government to obtain the loan of a headsman and his apparatus.

Long consultations were held at the ministry in Paris, but at last a reply was sent, with a memorandum of the expenses of the removal of guillotine and executioner, amounting in all to sixteen thousand francs.

His Monegascan Majesty thought the operation would be too costly; the murderer was certainly not worth that price. Sixteen thousand francs for the neck of a scoundrel! That would never do.

A similar application was then made to the Italian government. A

king, a brother, would doubtless not be so extortionate as a republic. But, for all that, the Italian government sent in an estimate for twelve thousand francs. Twelve thousand francs! Why, a new tax would have to be levied, a tax of two francs per head on the entire population.

They thought of having the wretch beheaded by a soldier. But, the general, when consulted, replied hesitatingly, that his men had probably not had sufficient practice with the sword to acquit themselves duly of a task requiring a large experience in the handling of that weapon.

Then the Prince again summoned the Supreme Court, and submitted the embarrassing position of affairs to it.

A long discussion ensued, without any practical solution being arrived at. At last the president proposed that the sentence of death should be commuted to imprisonment for life; and the proposition was adopted.

But there was no prison. It was necessary to make one, and a jailer was appointed to look after the prisoner.

For some months all went well. The captive slept throughout the day on a mattress in his cell, and his custodian did the same on a chair in front of the door, and watched the people as they passed by.

But the Prince is laudably thrifty, and has a full account rendered to him of all the little expenses incurred by his State; the list is not a long one. And so he received an account of the expenses relative to the creation of this new office, the maintenance of prisoner, prison and jailer. The wages of the last-named bore heavily on the sovereign's exchequer. At first he winced; and when he came to consider that this might almost last for ever, for the condemned man was young, he advised his Minister of Justice to take steps to suppress this expenditure.

The minister conferred with the president of the tribunal, and both were of opinion that the expense of the jailer should be suppressed. The prisoner, being requested to look after himself, would not fail to escape; and this would solve the difficulty to the satisfaction of all.

The jailer accordingly returned to his family, and a servant in the royal kitchen was simply charged with carrying, every morning and evening, food to the prisoner. But the latter made no attempt to regain his liberty.

Now, one day, when they had neglected to bring him his food, he quietly went and asked for it; and henceforth, in order to save the cook a journey, he came regularly at meal-times to eat with the servants of the household, with whom he became friendly.

After lunch he would take a walk as far as Monte-Carlo. Now and then he went into the Casino and risked a five-franc piece on the green table. If he gained, he went and had a good dinner at some famous hotel, and then returned to his prison, and fastened the door carefully on the inside. He never once staid out all night.

The situation became embarrassing, not so much for the criminal as for the judges. The court met again, and it was decided that he should be told to leave the principality of Monaco.

When this decision was made known to him, he simply replied : "You must be jesting. What is to become of me? I have no means of existence. I have no longer any home. What am I to do? I was sentenced to death, and you would not execute me. I said nothing. Afterwards, I was condemned to imprisonment for life, and handed over to a jailer. And again I said nothing.

"Now you wish to drive me out of the country. But I can't go. I am a prisoner, your prisoner, judged and condemned by you. I am undergoing my penalty honourably, and I shall stay here."

The Supreme Court was baffled. The Prince was in a terrible passion, and ordered that decisive measures should be taken.

The matter was again discussed. Finally it was decided to offer the man a pension of six hundred francs to go and live abroad. He consented.

He rents a small plot of ground within five minutes' walk of the dominions of his former sovereign, and lives happy on his own estate, growing vegetables and despising potentates.

But the court of Monaco warned, though rather late, by this incident, has come to an arrangement with the French government, and now hands over to us its malefactors, whom we put in the shade for a slight annual payment.

The decree regulating the scoundrel's pension and obliging him to quit the territory may be seen in the judicial archives.

Opposite the Prince's palace stands the rival mansion of La Roulette. No hatred, however, no enmity exists between them; for the latter establishment maintains the former, which in return affords its protection; an admirable example, a unique example of two neighbouring, powerful families living in peace in a little State, an example almost capable of effacing the remembrance of the feuds of the Capulets and Montagues. Here the ruling house, and there the gaming house! the old and the new society fraternising to the chinking of gold.

The rooms of the Prince are as difficult of access as those of the Casino are open to strangers. I betake myself to the latter.

A sound of money, continuous as the rolling of the ocean, falls on the ear as one enters, then enthralls one's whole being, its fascination stirring the heart, troubling the intellect, and firing the brain. One hears this singing, tempting noise continuously throughout the room—an appealing cry which draws to destruction.

Around each table is a dreadful group of players, the scum of societies, and of continents, in which men of the world, cheats from the middle classes of all nations, usurers, worn-out women, are elbowing one another, forming the strangest assembly of men of all races, castes, and origins. A museum of Russian, Brazilian, Chilian, Italian, Spanish, and German *rastaquouères*, of old women with reticules, of young adventuresses carrying on the wrist a small bag containing keys, a handkerchief, and the last two or three five-franc pieces destined for the green board when they fancy the chances are favourable.

I draw near the first table, and I see—ghastly pale, with knitted brow, compressed lip, the entire face contracted and hardened,—the young woman of the Bay of Agay, the pretty cooing dove of the sunlit forest and the moonlit shore. *He* is seated in front of her, his fingers nervously playing with a small heap of louis.

“Lay on the first square,” she says.

“All?”

“Yes, all.”

He puts the coins down in a small pile.

The croupier gives the wheel a turn; the ball runs, dances, stops.

"*Rien ne va plus*," a voice cries; and in another second calls out, "*Vingt-huit*."

The young woman starts, and says abruptly and harshly : "Come away."

He gets up from the table, and without looking at her, follows her; and one feels that now discord, and not harmony, fills their hearts.

Some one present remarked :

"Adieu to love! They don't look quite so tender, to-day."

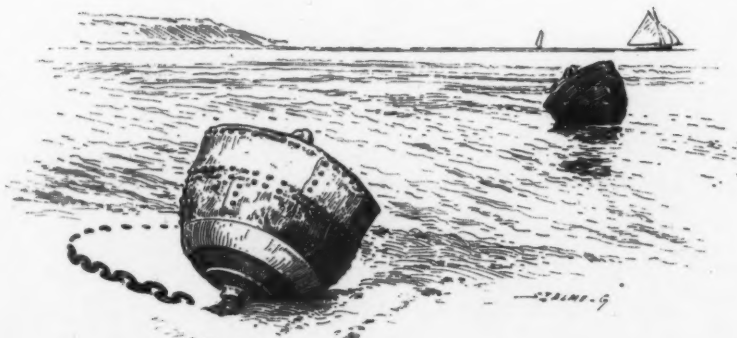
A hand strikes me on the shoulder. I turn round. It is my friend.

I have now to ask pardon for having thus spoken so much of my own doings. I wrote this journal of my musings for myself alone, or rather I availed myself of my floating solitude to jot down the wandering ideas which, like birds in the sky, come and go in our minds.

I have been asked to publish these disconnected, and I fear ill-digested, ill-constructed pages, which have no rational sequence, and which finish abruptly, simply because a squall put an end to my voyage.

I yield to this request; perhaps wrongly.

GUY DE MAUPASSANT.





MIREMONDE (*)

A MORAL TALE

The horses turned of their own accord, evidently familiar with their whereabouts, into a narrow avenue, which stretched ahead between the ravine and the fields of flowering millet. The thick canopy of leaves was quivering at the approach of evening; the chirping of crickets went out into the mist. Through the trunks of the plane-trees, the hills were seen putting on a veil of rosy vapour, and the maize swayed to and fro in the breeze. On a sudden, at the end of the sombre and verdure-clad alley, appeared the house, all modest and peaceful, with its garland of foliage and its garment of ivy. Under the porch there stood a man. Pons trembled, and closed his eyes.

"You are at home, Chevalier," said a melodious voice. "I thank you for coming."

Age had dealt tenderly with Don Juan. The body to which Beauty

(*) See *Art and Letters* for March, 1888, vol. I, p. 279.

owed her dearest victories, she had not the heart entirely to desert; but lingered there complacently, with something of the warmth and sweetness of even-tide. Time had crowned the haughty brow with snow, but the unwrinkled face preserved the purity of its lines; it kept, for all its sixty years, its high-bred grace. Under the arcade of the eyebrows, glittered the two clear gems, whose glance glided like a caress, or pierced like a wound. Nothing could equal the cruel charm of those sea-green eyes, shot with gold; and by their gleam one could divine how they had made hearts throb with desire and pleasure. The firm outline of the nose, with its quivering nostrils, betrayed the predatory nature of the man, but the feline mouth, whose smile had chiselled out its fine contours, gaily displayed, with, as it were, a re-assuring promise, teeth of dazzling whiteness. The straight, short hair, the silky moustache, and the fine pointed beard, glistening with silver, gave something of the harmony of antiquity to that manly countenance, pale as it was with the boundless pathos of the many stormy passions that had been mirrored in it. Air, carriage, voice, gesture, all had become noble and full of calm. Standing on his threshold, the aged lord, clad in a dress of dull embroidered velvet, pointed out to Pons the entrance to the house. The Chevalier, moved to the depths of his soul by this silent welcome, bent over the old man's hand, and with a kiss lighter than breath, he touched the transparent fingers, where gleamed the smouldering fires of an opal.

"Welcome to Miremonde," said the host, with an old-world courtesy.

As the Chevalier passed through the doorway, he overheard this dialogue in his rear, in low tones.

"Well, master?"

"You are right, the thing is marvellous!"

The room which des Liguères entered was furnished in old-fashioned taste, with rich arms of all countries, hanging against the faded tapestry. Opposite the high window, which opened on the gardens, the gilt frame of an old picture reflected the dying gleams of daylight. It was a full-length portrait of a youth of sovereign beauty. Upright, with head bare, and sword on thigh, the young Chevalier, arrayed as for some festivity, was crumpling a letter between his fingers: he was smiling, too, but with a

strange, wearied smile, that saddened his proud face. Afar, in the depths of the canvas, the eye dimly discerned a sort of dream-land, all bathed in blueish light, where were darting hither and thither nimble forms.

Pons, with difficulty smothering a cry of astonishment, stood transfixed before this painting; he seemed to be seeing himself as in a looking-glass.

"Tell me, sir, is this your portrait or my own?" asked a gracious voice.

Don Juan's eyes wandered from the Chevalier to the picture, as though to compare image and model.

"It was myself, once," he said with a sigh.

And, without giving heed to his guest's bewilderment, he sat down beside him, on a divan.

"This rascal is worth his price!" he added, pointing to Leporello, who was relieving Pons of his hat and sword. "I laughed in his face at first, when he told me he had seen my double. I now perceive that he told the truth, though flattering me withal. Ah! sir! How the sight of you brings back my youth and comforts my old eyes!"

The Chevalier was silent and abashed. On the road he had got ready several complimentary phrases, full of elegant and simple courtesy, by which he hoped to give Don Juan, without loss of time, a rare idea of his visitor; the words, alas! refused to come. At length, with the blind courage of a coward, he made the plunge, confiding in his star:

"You see me," he stammered, "confused and delighted. I beg of your kindness to spare me. Only yesterday, I could never have dreamed of the honour that is done to me. Deign then, to accept my homage, and hold me as one entirely yours."

"The Chevalier has your voice! Has he not, master?" cried Leporello gleefully.

"Peace, knave," said Don Juan, giving free rein to his good humour. "And go bid them serve us with supper!"

There was an interval of silence, during which the poor Chevalier thought himself the stupidest lout in the whole kingdom.

"The portrait you are looking at," continued Don Juan, "your portrait, my dear guest, is the work of a Florentine artist. The Pope himself

has nothing finer, and I confess myself proud of this masterpiece. I was a mad lover of the arts in my youth. Do you know Florence, Chevalier?"

"Alas! I know nothing. I am a mere Toulouse man, a prisoner in his own town, now for the first time on my travels."

"A charming city, that Toulouse of yours! I once experienced there the warmest of welcomes——"

"They have lovely women there," Pons ventured to remark.

"There are lovely women everywhere," answered Don Juan. "But here is Leporello. Well! you old rascal, are you going to let us have supper to-night?"

On a table, decorated with vases filled with bunches of fresh-gathered iris, Italian porcelain and Catalonian glass reflected the light from the candelabra. The rich plate engraved with the owner's arms, the choice meats, fruits, rare wines, everything in this exquisite array of luxury, tended discreetly to flatter the guest of the evening. In face of this warm welcome and refined taste, Pons felt his assurance coming back to him. "So then," he thought, "I am really supping with Don Juan." And as the emotions of the day had given him an appetite, he vowed to prove himself worthy of this marvellous hospitality.

"Sir," he said, as he took his seat, "you are treating me beyond my deserts."

"You are jesting, Monsieur des Liguières, I, on the contrary, am afraid lest you should find but indifferent cheer at the table of a mere countryman, like myself. But I know there is no one like your Frenchman for courtesy, and I have reckoned upon your indulgence."

Pons answered by a bow.



Still Don Juan continued his excuses, and did the honours of the table with an air of high-bred good humour.

"The wine Leporello is offering you is from my own vineyard, these ortolans are of my own shooting, and I am giving you fruit from my own orchard. You are supping with a rustic host, do not forget that, I entreat you."

"Do you always live here?" asked Pons.

"Miremonde is henceforward my universe. I long sought a place of retreat. I have come to a halt here, under these old trees, and I hope never to quit their shade. On these heights all speaks to me of rest. In the summer, I hunt the *izard* and the wild goat in the mountains, I water my pinks, I explore the valley; in winter I read over again the history of wars, or I review old memories in the chimney-corner. I am an old man——"



"Can he be converted, I wonder?" thought des Liguières. Was this really Don Juan, the impious Don Juan, this serene old man, who kept talking of solitude and forgetfulness? Had the weary sinner repented, and was the mouth that blasphemy had made famous about to chant hypocritical praise of wisdom and virtue? Was this un hoped-for interview only to lead up to the most sordid of disillusionings? The Chevalier had not come a-visiting Don Juan to listen to talk about the vanity of human passions; the first Huguenot he came across on the Navarre road,

would serve for that business. It was the story of his debauches the Chevalier looked for from Don Juan, and above all the explanation of the mystery of his pretended damnation. A fine time for philosophizing, indeed!

"Touching that matter," said Pons to himself, "I know, alas! as much as any mortal man; Oisille has taken good care duly to edify me. I also have to consult him about my own woes on that head. May be it would be well to tell him the story of my mishaps? The extraordinary element in my ill-fortune will doubtless induce him to drop his mask, and I am

anxious to see what he will think of his guest, on learning that, had it not been for the merest chance, my body carried along with the pebbles of the Gave would now be food for the eagles—— Now for it."

And, as a commencement of hostilities, the Chevalier suddenly gave forth the most woeful of sighs.

"How old are you, my dear guest?" asked Don Juan.

"Twenty."

"And you sigh like that?"

"Alas!"

"An 'alas'! somewhat out of keeping with your spring-time."

"Sir Don Juan, in the battle of wits, as in everything else, I look to be overcome by you. I am quite aware it would be easy for you to wrest my secret from my heart; I prefer then frankly to tell you the cause of the state of vexation and low spirits in which you see me."

"Really, Chevalier, you frighten me!"

"I was far from expecting the honour of supping in your company. Permit me, then, to profit by this un hoped-for opportunity, by reaping the benefit of your advice. Where could I find a confidant more expert in affairs of the heart? I turn to you as to my soul's physician."

"Speak to me as you would to a friend. I am all attention."

"I am in evil plight. I had a mistress, a treasure of grace and beauty. I was madly——"

"She betrayed you?"

"Basely."

"With your greatest friend, I dare say?"

Pons bowed his head.

Don Juan's white hand fell in a consoling caress on the young fellow's shoulder.

"'Tis a story I have often listened to, but on your lips it will seem new to me. Go on."

Thereupon the Chevalier told him all : his capricious adventures in quest of happiness, his disappointments, his new hopes, and the hateful treason at the end. He painted Oisille just the woman she was, without palliating her, without exaggeration, shewing her in the genuine black hue

of her crime. He was sincere and eloquent. His story over, he paused, waiting for a phrase on the level of his ill-fortune.

"Is that all?" asked Don Juan.

Good heavens, yes, that was all! Lying troth, oaths violated, false tears, prostituted beauty, faithless friendship, only that! The question seemed insulting or ironical. The Chevalier's voice became bitter :

"That is all," he said.

Don Juan had risen, tender and grave.

"I wonder you are living to say so, Monsieur des Liguères," he replied, in the most solemn of tones. Pons did his best to brave the look which met his own.

"I left Toulouse," he cried, "determined to put an end to an existence that Oisille's infamy made unbearable for me. I fled my kind, and asked nature to fix the hour of my final departure."

"Nature, I am sure, told you to stay. I know her; she is a courtesan. She gives every one the counsel he wishes for, and does violence to no man's conscience."

"I do not yet know her answer."

"I can guess it: you will make old bones."

Don Juan filled a goblet, and held it out to Pons, with a smile: "Chevalier, with your permission, I will give you a toast. The health of your friend Roquetaillade!"

The Chevalier gave a horrified start.

"Your Grace," he said dryly, "had promised to treat me as a friend, not a school-boy."

"You refuse!" continued Don Juan. "Oh! youth, that fancies everything made to be its prize! What a delusion it is to try and serve it! You are ungrateful, sir Pons, I will drink by myself."

Des Liguères bit his lips. "I find the joke a cruel one," he murmured.

Don Juan went to him with open arms, and held him for a moment to his heart.



"Pardon me, Chevalier, but age has privileges which it is sometimes tempted to abuse. Be assured that I am not gibing at your grief. Were the humblest clod-hopper in the valley to come a-telling me how he had been deceived by his sweetheart, I would hear him out with respect. Is not all that a woman causes, whether it be joy or grief, a sacred thing? Your face, so strangely like mine in the past, authorises me to treat you as a son. You are of a high strain, and noble-hearted. I love your candour and your air. For a moment I believed myself your father."

The Chevalier's ill-humour gave way before this outburst of tender sympathy. He communed with himself, and in a rapid survey took for the first time the exact measure of his grief.

"Ah! dear master!" he cried, "I am still only a child! I am not used to suffering. Aid me then, out of pity, to read to the bottom of my own heart! Since the science of love has no mysteries for you, impart to me a little of your wisdom—— Let me be the inheritor of your genius!"

"Science, genius, wisdom,"—— murmured Don Juan—— "Sounding words!" And he sighed in his turn.

"Chevalier," he said of a sudden, "I have a great mind to tell you a story."

"I am listening with my whole soul."

"But you will drink Roquetaillade's health? You will promise? I wish it."

*
* *

"I owe you the naked truth, my dear Chevalier. You love me, I feel. I love you for what I find in you of my old self. Since it is your dream to be a second Don Juan, it is well that you should know my later character. This, then, O heir of mine, is my testament; may you be able to grasp the sense of it."

"Your will shall be mine," interrupted des Liguères. "I swear——"

"Swear not, young man! Perchance it may not be granted unto you to obey. Listen.

"Before receiving my letter you thought me dead. Haply you were

only half-mistaken. I am not in ignorance of any one of the legends which are current among the crowd, in regard to my end. It is meet that those who have made some noise in this world of ours should beguile by their adventures the leisure evenings of worthy folk. It amuses me to hear of these fables, through Leporello. Were I a better man, I would write the story of my life, it would be something different from the common tradition. But the populace would charge me with imposture. Their judgment has been delivered; nothing will change it.

"I will take care not to importune you with the full narrative of my deeds. Of my birth I will tell you only this : it put my cradle in mourning.

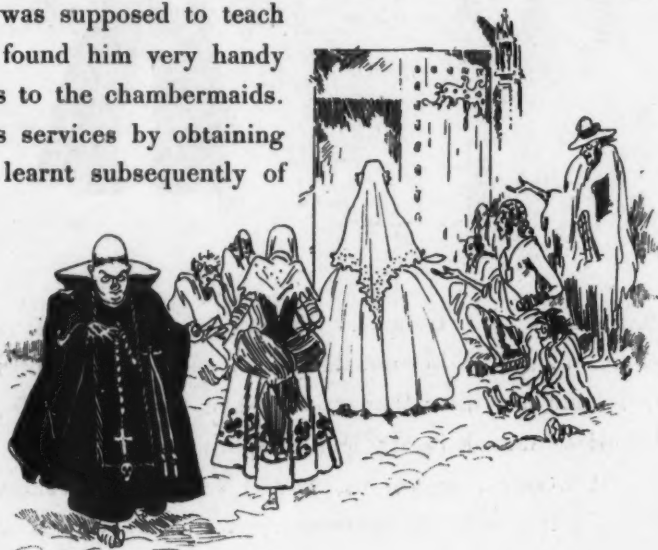


The Duchess Tenorio, my mother, died without having seen me. A languid slumber cast its shadow over her, as soon as her task had been accomplished. In a few hours, sleeping and inert, she expired. My brow never knew her kisses. Nothing remains with me of hers, not even her portrait. One day, when a mere child, I asked my father if he possessed some likeness of the dead. My question vexed the worthy lord. He was going a-hunting, a pleasure of which he was inordinately fond. He answered me, whistling up his pack, that the features of the departed Duchess were for ever graven on

his heart. That, indeed, was enough for him.

"I have little to say about Don Luis. The joy of loving one another was not vouchsafed to us. The duties he fulfilled near the person of His Catholic Majesty, solicitude for his fame and for his private affairs, did not leave him leisure to concern himself with my education. Still, he gave me a few lessons in fencing; he was a swordsman of remarkable skill. To him I owe that readiness to draw, which has now and then played me scurvy tricks. According to the testimony of his friends, the Duke, one of the Twenty-Four of Seville, was the most accomplished gentleman of his time. I am sorry to have known so little of him, divers causes soon bore us asunder. In the space of twenty years I but once

set eyes on him. On that occasion he scarcely spared the time to curse me, and was off again in hot haste. My pride was full tilt against his, and the last look we ever exchanged was a glance of hate. I remember—I was mad at the time!—saluting his departure with an outburst of insolence. I have always felt a sincere sorrow for that; such things are the ways of vulgar knaves. I grew up alone, in the midst of lackey's lies, and tutors' flatteries. They taught me to bow, dance, ride, and fence in all due form. A fat monk, who had to be fetched out of the cellar at lesson times, was supposed to teach me good conduct. I found him very handy as a carrier of messages to the chambermaids. Later on I rewarded his services by obtaining an abbey for him. I learnt subsequently of his dying in the odour of sanctity after burning a lot of Jews in the Square at Toledo. According to this worthy man's notions I was meant for the Episcopate. I disappointed his expectations, and, as soon as



I was fifteen, I was enrolled among the Queen's pages.

"I was a pretty fellow at that time, I can assure you. I need not go into details. Recall what you were yourself at that age. The ladies of the Court, struck with a lively sympathy for my person, shared the honour of completing my education. They courted me in such numbers, that in dallying at the feet of one of them rather than another, I should have sinned against courtesies. There it was that I early learnt to look for variety in love. I plucked the leaves of these by no means retiring flowers, one by one, with the heedlessness of a spoiled child. But not one of these passing fancies has left a single recollection behind. I should find it difficult, if I shut my eyes, to put a name to their faces;

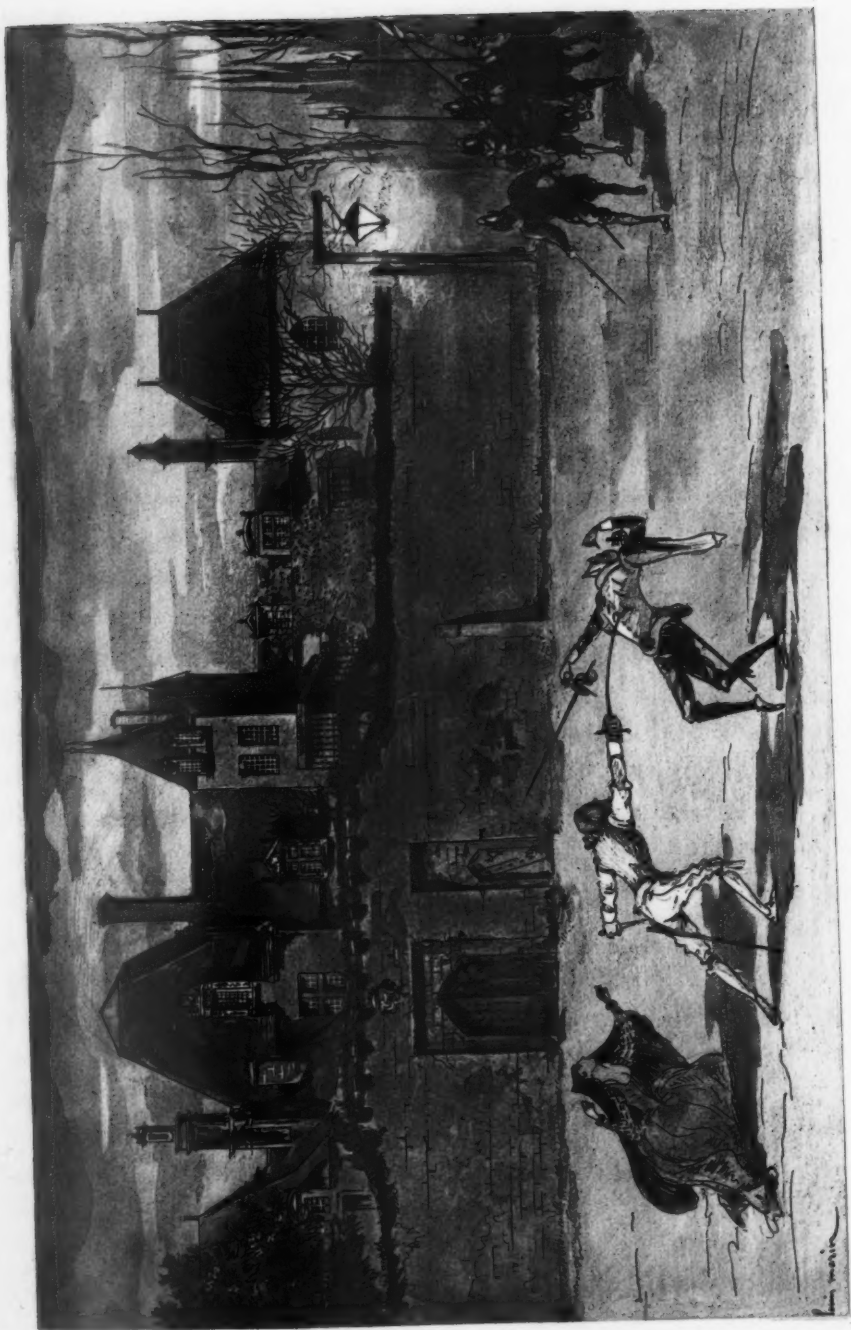
this memory of mine is a very Golgotha. All that I remember is that they were both depraved and charming, and also above all, that they were *all alike*. How fond they were of me!

"Thanks to them, the sensual side of me at twenty years of age was as



that of an old trooper. What is at once the despair and delight of young men had become for me a mere matter of routine. I went to a tryst like a soldier to parade. The Court of Spain, happily, is so rich in beauties, that I rarely had a spare moment.

"I wonder, nowadays, how I could have wandered without losing my way, in this maze of successes. I must have made some innocent mistakes, and among so many Ariadnes, have now and then tangled the skein. Still, no one ever reproached me, the reason of which indulgence I take to be this. I already had the reputation, in no way an unjust one, of being the least faithful of lovers. Now, women—those at least of whom I am speaking—care very little about being loved. To be preferred is with them everything. Each of my fair friends took a twofold pleasure in stealing me from another; the pleasure, in the first place of vexing a rival, to which was added the ambitious project of avoiding a like evil for herself, by bringing my inconstancy once for all to an end. Each one of them, in yielding to me, hid in the chastest corner of her soul the hope of being beforehand with me in betrayal. Habit giving me insight, I read this gentle thought in the heaven of her eyes, and, by the promptness





of my farewell, I loyally awoke her from her delusion. Then I insensibly accustomed myself to see in a lover's meeting, nothing but a conflict of pride, a dishonourable duel, in which each adversary seeks to outdo the other in perfidy. I went to the arms of a mistress, armed as for an ambush, guarding above all against losing my self-possession. Through this armour of distrust it was only an icy pleasure that reached my heart. Such were the love affairs of my youth.

"So much happiness soon became wearisome, and I left the Court, anxious to see the world. I made the tour of Germany, Italy, France, and the dominions of the Grand Turk. Everywhere my reputation had gone before me. I was made aware of that by the disappointingly easy character of my conquests. Women of all races, and of all colours, made a point of favourably receiving my attentions, even before they were offered.

"Were there a thousand and three of them, or more still? It would be hard for me to say. Leporello will edify you on that point. The rascal employed his leisure in taking notes. I was even brought to such a pitch as to long for a rebuff. In search of virtue, I forced open the doors of cloisters; what I found inside shamed even my own vice. The remarks of my biographers on this subject are the bare truth. Still I should like to make a passing rectification of an inaccuracy that strikes me as offensive. Scrawls are being passed about, in which I am accused of brutal ways, fit only for pirates: philters, potions, chains, cells, and so forth. It pleases me to think, Chevalier, that you have never condescended to credit a word of these cock-and-bull stories. They were invented, I fancy, by people with somewhat meagre ideas of the true nature of pleasure. Without talking of the flattering opinion you are pleased to entertain in regard to me, I appeal to your own recollections. Experience must forbid you to admit that a woman may be outraged— But I perceive a gesture on your part. Speak out, I beg—"

Pons blushed to feel his thoughts guessed. "Pardon me, your lordship," he stammered, "I thought in spite of myself—"

"Of what?"

"Of the daughter of—"

Seeing Don Juan turn pale, he stopped abruptly.



"Ah!— Anna! What a dreadful story that was! I will say a few words on that subject out of regard for you— Yes, 'tis true, I shed the old man's blood! It was in my own despite, I swear. He had struck me in the face, with the flat of his sword. He was a tough customer with the rapier, in spite of his age. The match between us was an even one.

To parry his blows was all I attempted. His daughter's cries brought the watch upon us. I lost my head, and returned his attack. He fell——"

Don Juan, borne down by this recollection, fell for a moment into a fit of his old remorse. There was an interval of oppressive silence.

"But as for her," he continued with a fierce outburst of anger. "Oh, I used no violence towards that woman. I met her at the ball given to celebrate her betrothal to Ottavio. The unhappy fellow idolized her. As he was of the lesser nobility, the Commander long held him in contempt. He joined the army, covered himself with honour on the field, and returned, as attached and faithful as ever. For four years he waited. Young, open-hearted and enthusiastic, he laid at his lady's feet the flower of a first and only love. I was worn-out and corrupt. It took me a week to be preferred to a lover like that! It was a sad bit of work I was guilty of in taking this woman from such a man. But what name can you find for her fall? This madwoman, whose absurd caprice revolted me the very first evening, buried her father with her own hands. My share in the crime was bad enough, and I intend her to have the credit for hers. Besides, Ottavio and she took their revenge. I will tell you how by and by——"

"Let us leave these topics. What is the use of going through my life again? The first man you meet will tell you that Don Juan Tenorio was the man who, of all men, enjoyed himself the most. The thing must be true since everybody says so. Be it so; there was no end to my diversion. It is the same with the people who row night and day on His Majesty's galleys.

"What was it I was thus pursuing in my mad career? One of the

poets of your country makes believe to know. He will have it that my wandering desires were in quest of Love. By his account a sublime vision lit up my nights. My arms were clasped round so many phantoms only to embrace, were it but for one second, the flying form of the god; I fell a glorious martyr to a too lofty conception of happiness; my heart was consumed in its own flame! I take it you have read those pretty verses. The gentle spirit who strung them together in my praise, paid me, of a truth, signal honour. But I have promised you to be sincere. 'Tis, alas, but a poet's dream. Though I prefer that error to that of the out and out fools who accuse me of having outraged sleeping children, I cannot allow you to share it. I was by no means troubled with any such ideal. Weariness, the incurable weariness of the fortunate, had dried up the well-spring of joy in my heart. All I ever sought was to escape from myself. Wretched galley-slave of pleasure that I was, I sought in to-day forgetfulness of yesterday, and the morrow had hardly dawned, but I was sick of it! Having drunk my fill of every cup, the old wine for me had lost its savour. But I am wandering, and weary you. I am forgetting, too, that I owe you a story. Here it is.

"One of my favourite amusements was to flee for some weeks from the monotonous scene of my successes, and to ride away, alone, in quest of adventure. My whim had this time led me into Castille, in the genial Sierra of Gredos. One day, as I was skirting the banks of the Tietar, I foolishly fell a-quarrelling with a Chevalier de Saint-Jacques, who insisted

on taking his horse to the water before me. We drew. At the first pass, a well-delivered thrust through the shoulder laid me low in a ditch. I fainted. Leporello, prudent as ever, had surveyed the affair, hidden behind a tree. Seeing me unconscious, he took fright, and made off to look for succour in the village hard-by.

"I woke to find myself stretched on a comfortable bed, in a strange room. A servant, who had her spinning-wheel at the bedside, told me, in answer to my questions,



that Doña Andrea, Marchioness of Montalvo, bade me welcome under her roof. Leporello acquainted me with the rest. Some peasants, finding him in distress, had directed him to the seat of the Marchioness. The noble lady, widow of a companion of the late king, was spending her old age in retirement from the world on her estate of Pulgar. Her charity spread her fame in that part of the country, which they call La Vera. My valet had knocked at the outer gates to ask aid for his master, Don Miguel de Ercilla, the name I assumed on my travels. Doña Andrea had lost no time in despatching her people to my assistance, and had had me lodged in the best chamber in her dwelling. She begged me to remain a guest at Pulgar until I should be completely recovered. I had no choice but to accept an asylum, one moreover so courteously proffered, for mine was a sharp hurt, and fever was beginning to lay hold of me. I sent Leporello to lay my homage at the Marchioness's feet.

"A surgeon from the neighbourhood dressed my wound to the best of his skill. He laid claim to having saved me. In any case, thanks to him, or to nature, I was on my feet again at the end of a week. Thus restored, I made preparations for prompt departure. I solicited the favour of an audience from Doña Andrea, who sent an answer to the effect that I should much oblige her by tarrying yet awhile at Pulgar. Her whole household was holiday making : her only daughter being welcomed home from her convent that very day. I was invited to take part in the rejoicings appointed for this joyous return. Gratitude made me the slave of Madame de Montalvo's slightest wish ; I consented to stay.

"While dressing, I put some questions to Leporello.

" 'The mother,' he told me, 'has an air of grandeur in her widow's weeds. As for the daughter, I have not been able to get a sight of her. All I know is that she is hardly seventeen, and that she comes from Our Lady of Grace at Avila. The people of the place seem to adore their young mistress : they are never tired of lauding her virtues.'

" 'A country bred school-girl,' thought I.

"The Count of Ercilla was presented to the ladies of Pulgar. The slightest details of the interview are still present to my mind ; you will

pardon me for dwelling on them with pleasure. I seem to see the old Marchioness, her hair hidden under the widows' hood, advancing towards me, with head erect, and simple bearing. Not far from her, in the soft light of the lattice, gleamed a white robe and fair tresses.

"'Elvira,' said Doña Andrea, 'the Count is our guest.'

"She was still a mere child, and a child who seemed to me of middling beauty. In the furtive look she cast in my direction, two large eyes of palest azure lit up her thinnish features. With a school-girl's curtsy, she held out her hand. I took her slender



fingers, and kissed them; their freshness was delicious, and without thinking what I was doing, I pressed my lips to them longer than was quite seemly. When I raised my head, Elvira's countenance wore the hue of dawn, and I perceived that she was lovely.

"'This minx is my treasure,' said the Marchioness, toying with her child's locks of amber. 'I should have liked her to have stayed another year at the Convent, so as to be quite perfect: the proper place for pure hearts is among the angels. She chooses, as you see, to come home, because in her own words, she finds convent life tedious. I ought to scold her.'

"The young girl slipped her head under her mother's arm, and crept close against her heart.

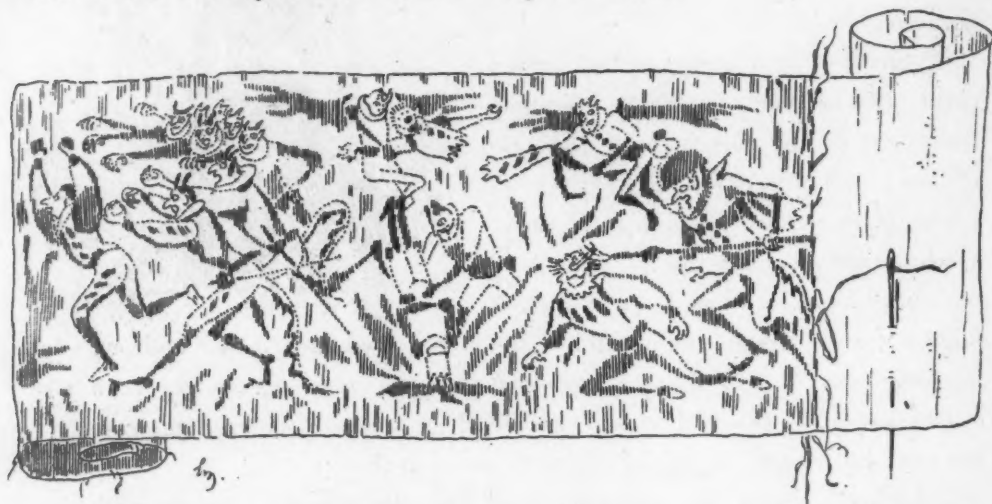
"'There is my place,' she said in a half-wilful, half-wheedling way.

"A passionate embrace united the two heads, golden locks and grey hairs; and I caught a murmur of tenderness. Thus hidden under her mother's veil, and all fenced round with pure love, this maiden of seventeen appeared more inaccessible and remote from me than the Infanta herself.

"The Marchioness possessed both instruction, and mother-wit; a light

and fluent conversation was set going. Elvira bending over her embroidery frame, kept silent in a corner.

" 'Have you nothing to say, my angel?' asked her mother. 'Excuse her, Count, you intimidate her. Odd child! as a rule when she comes home, she deafens me with her prattle. Have you nothing to tell us, sweetheart, about your life at Our Lady of Grace?'



" 'I hasten,' I said rising, 'to let Dona Elvira regain her liberty, and the use of her voice. I have already trespassed on your kindness, ladies, I will take my leave this evening.'

" 'You offend me, in talking like that,' said the Marchioness. 'You are by no means well yet, sir Count. You need a few days more of our mountain air, and the doctor's draughts. Elvira would be ashamed were she to drive you away.'

" 'An evil thought shot through my brain. 'Be it so,' I said to myself, and drawing near the maiden: 'I entreat your grace,' I murmured, 'to take no heed of my presence.' She raised her limpid eyes, in which one could detect a shade of fear.

" 'You will make my little nun weep, if you talk to her as you would to the ladies of the Court. Come here, my pet, and let us see this fine piece of work of yours.'

" 'It is for the chapel at Avila, mother. A bit of the Last Judgment.'

"I bent down over the embroidery. Elvira's brow was close to my lips.

" 'This alguazil is making an ugly face!' I said, pointing to a personage to whom the fair artist was giving a coat of red silk.

" 'If you please, that is a devil.'

" 'Indeed. What grudge has he against this yellow man?'

" 'That is one of the damned. See: here are the liars, and all those who have used naughty words. Their tongues are being torn out by a burning fork.'

"Her pretty fingers, reddened by the pressure of the needle, strayed among the figures, part horrible, part grotesque, of the tormentors and their victims.

" 'The fellow over there then,' said I, 'must have been an awful liar; he has a hundred devils or more at his heels.'

" 'That is a courtier.'

"It was in the freshest of voices she said this. On a sudden the comic fury of one of the demons gave her thoughts a merry turn, and, for the first time, I saw her laugh. Laughter is the test of beauty, my dear Pons. With most women, it is nothing but a grimace, which breaks up the lines of the face, and lays bare the shallows of the soul. The silly and impure cannot stand the ordeal; but those whom laughter becomes, you may take it from me, are of race divine.

"Elvira's laugh was something miraculous. It warbled, like a stave of pure music, and sent a quiver through her infantine throat. With her, everything laughed, from her voluptuous neck, and trembling shoulders, to her cheeks, all in bloom, and her dazzling mouth. Before this maidenly form, in such abandonment, I felt the gnawing of desire. In the hope of hearing, on some morn of amorous wantonness, that laughter rippling under my kisses, my vicious fancy, for a time lulled to sleep, felt a savage awakening. And I swore within myself—such oaths came easy to me—to pluck this flower of childhood without delay!



"The task of taming this wild heart called for the wiles of a fowler. I became tenderly fraternal, did my best to imitate Elvira's own accents in speaking to her of the things she loved. Little by little, I found her growing less timid. My joking brought up to her features that cast of gaiety that made her so lovely. In an hour's time we were fast friends. Our conversation, begun aloud, in a tone of not unseemly flirtation, finished quite low, in a confidential murmur, full of half-avowals, silent intervals, and sighs. She prattled about her convent life; I told her stories of the wars. She would have chosen to live in the times of chivalry, and to dress with her own hands the wounds of doughty warriors. She confessed to me, with her ingenuous frankness, that she would have liked to have cured me herself, claiming to know of a balm of sovereign virtue; and having questioned me about the cause of my presence at Pulgar, she prettily complimented me on my valour.

" 'You were attacked by bandits?' she asked.

"The ever-zealous Leporello gave me out in the servants' quarters as a Paladin; according to him, I had defended the honour of a fair traveller, whose coach had been attacked by miscreants. There was nothing for it but to repeat with embellishments of my own, my valet's story; but I was grateful to him for his fiction, for I saw Elvira's virginal breast palpitate with enthusiasm.

" 'I like to see sword-thrusts dealt for the honour of fair ladies,' she cried all radiant with valorous emotion.

" 'Was it in the convent, señorita, that you caught these warlike tastes?'

" 'My father was a soldier,' she answered.

"Pardon this prolixity, my dear guest: I forget myself in living over again, one by one, every second of that most blessed hour. Every word she uttered that day was divine. The slightly unchastened grace of her thoughts, was shewn to me as through a crystal. She unveiled the mysteries of her very soul: goodness, faith, heroism, were there reflected in faithful images. All thoughts of evil glided off her mind like water over marble. Childish dreams, airs of serene melancholy, credulous hopes, all seemed new to me in her mouth. Her candour breathed a gust of





April on my weary and worn-out spirit. I could have listened to her prattle for ever. I had to leave her. I tore myself away, touched by a strange emotion. She had intoxicated me with her sweetness. To be sure, many young girls had fallen in my way; I was a connoisseur in mock modesty. I knew what an amount of shy trickery and cold calculation may be hidden behind a brow of angelic purity. But, this time it was genuine innocence! Her voice had the ring of gold; a deep azure tinged her eyes. Virtue, ignorant of danger, or, may be, disdainful of it, had here crossed my path. The sudden appearance of so strange a thing provoked me like a challenge. Before the unexplored world thus opened out to me, my curiosity grew eager. The dominion of my caprice was implacable, and I obeyed it like a blind slave. It passed sentence on Elvira.

"This sentence was easy enough for me to execute. I felt quietly sure of being already beloved by this child; her looks, when they met mine, were fraught with avowal. Her passion, disarmed, waited only for my first attack. She was not one of those who stop to haggle, once they have resolved to yield. Hitherto I owed my triumphs to my renown alone; I was sick of those joys to be had without asking. Elvira at least knew nothing of Don Juan. She would love in me none but myself. Was it not my secret dream, to mirror my image in the depths of a virgin soul, and to see myself there, restored to youth?

"But it was a husband she looked for. The faith that is not plighted in front of the altar did not exist for her naive piety. To conquer her would involve a crime. I had long done counting them. However, my frivolous cruelty found sport in the idea of a marriage; weariness of spirit is a fierce counsellor. Still, I vaguely foresaw a tragic morrow for these chance nuptials, but did I not know what was due from me? The Duchess Tenorio, widow of a living husband, would be assured of a lot not unworthy of her—

"Besides, I was in no mood for reasoning. I made for evil, like an arrow to its mark.

"A few days passed by.

"One evening we were in the garden; Doña Andrea had retired, some-

what indisposed. It was the close of a brilliant day. Elvira, with her tresses bare, and in a playful mood, was following the dragon-flies in their flight



through the orchard. Suddenly she uttered a cry : some reptile, crawling across her path had startled her. Without stopping to think, she hid herself against my breast. I put my arms round her, and imprinted the mark of my lips on her brow—

“ Pons, I have seen many tears flow ; I have shed blood ; I have listened to the voice of God’s wrath roaring over the sea ; I have never seen anything so full of solemn suggestion as that virgin’s dismay at a kiss. She swooned, like a severed lily, whilst a death-like shadow cast a veil over her pale features. I embraced her anew.

“ ‘Elvira, come to yourself. I love you.’

“ A sudden dew brought back the light to her eyes, and I felt a smile return to the lips of whose perfume I was drinking deep.

“ ‘Are you still afraid,’ I asked.

“ ‘Afraid? Of what? You are a gentleman, and I am of noble birth.’

“ ‘Will you have me for your husband, Doña Elvira?’

“ She placed her little hand in mine.

“ ‘Miguel, I give up my very soul to you!’

“ ‘You love me then?’

“ ‘Since the first day I saw you. I am yours.’

“ Once more I opened my arms to clasp her.

“ ‘Let us go in,’ she whispered. ‘Till to-morrow, Miguel.’

“ She held her finger to her lips, and I watched the white gleam of her dress disappear in the shadows of the garden.

“ Ah! Chevalier! I hasten to have done with my story!— We were wedded. The nuptials of Elvira de Montalvo and Count Miguel de Ercilla caused the whole country-side of the verdant Vera to keep high festival. The shepherds of Gredos brought my bride to me under a canopy of foliage. I received her from her mother’s hands, as the bells of Pulgar rang out peals of joy, one summer morning. The priest had hardly blessed

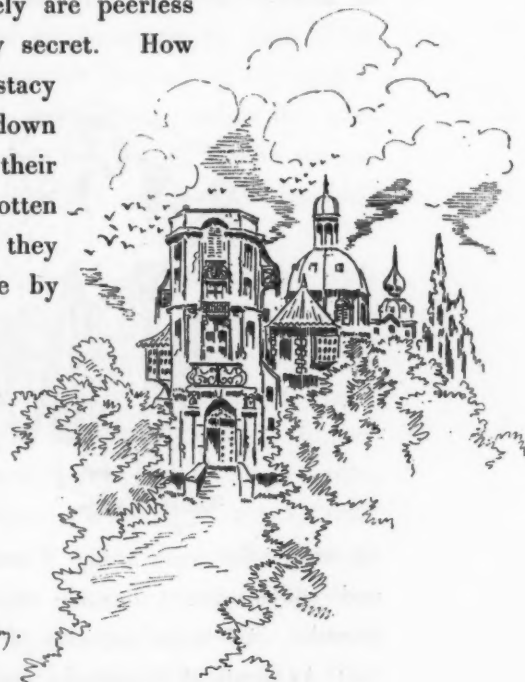
the rings, before I carried off Elvira like a thief. A mansion I owned in the neighbourhood of Segovia, had been made ready for our reception. There it was—— About this I would rather be silent! There are recollections not to be called up without profanation.

“My senses, which had feasted their fill at every hostelry of pleasure, had long been plunged in a heavy sleep. The awakening came on Elvira’s breast. Women who yield themselves entirely are peerless enchantresses. They alone know the mighty secret. How all-powerful is their fragile strength! The ecstasy to be divined in their languishing eyes bears down the strongest will; their chaste abandonment, their docile modesty, set one a-murmuring forgotten words. You think to gratify them and it is they who gratify you; they make delight double by making it pure. Pleasure is the daughter of innocence, and Elvira’s innocence transported me to the very heaven of love. My dear companion lulled me to dreams as sweet as her own, and, with her slender arms entwining me, I tasted the bliss of forgetfulness for the first time.

“As she lay, wrapt in peaceful slumbers, I listened to the soft sound of her breath, coming and going between her smiling lips.

So charming was she thus that she inspired me with a sort of dread. I was afraid, should I still be there at her awakening, of remaining the captive of her weakness. Constant use, now become second nature, made me throw away flowers whose fragrance I had once enjoyed. My vanity bade me eschew emotion, as something to be ashamed of. Solicitude for what I called my liberty pinned me to my solitary fate. Then, too, so many morrows had belied the promise of to-day, that I dared not believe in the return of another hour like the last. What else decided me? It was not until later I came to understand that there are perfumes and raptures that last.

“I lightly kissed Elvira’s tresses and was gone. A brief note, entrusted



to Leporello, let her know what manner of man, and how unworthy of her purity was he whose name she would henceforth bear.

"I had always felt a longing to see the Indies, and now made up my mind for the trip. I should be putting the ocean between Elvira and myself. Leporello would join me at Palos.

"Admiral Sayavedra, who was setting sail for El Dorado, was a friend of mine. He gave an entertainment on board in my honour. It was



an orgy, the very thing I was in need of. In the midst of buccaneers and courtezans, I became Don Juan once more, the admiration of the crowd. All were envious of me; I was so happy.

"As soon as Leporello put in an appearance, I took him aside.

"'Well?' I asked.

"His rascally countenance grew dark. 'The thing is done, master!'

"'What did she say?'

"'Nothing. Not one word. After reading your letter, the Señora put her hand to her heart, and fell backwards. Her women ran to her aid, and brought her to again.'

"'Did she speak this time?'

"'No. She seemed beside herself, and stared at one corner of the wall— This one is not like the rest, your Honour!'

"'Leave me!' I cried.

"At this moment the ship's bell gave the signal for departure, and the vessel weighed anchor.

"What a hateful prison is pride! I was a grandee of Spain, my wishes were law. I had only to say a word to Sayavedra. He would have lowered a boat, nothing was done yet that could not be undone. On that Spanish mainland, which was gradually disappearing over there, in the darkness of night, peace and pardon awaited me. I spoke not a word. I did not choose that people should be laughing at Don Juan behind my back; but elected to bear the grievous burden of my glory. I spent the night on the poop, alone with my crime, under the vast canopy of the heavens. When dawn whitened the crests of the waves, I was still glued to the same spot. The sailors had left me undisturbed, thinking me overcome with wine.

"In the Indies, where I tarried for nearly a year, I went through with my customary work. In those distant dependencies, my name is to this day a by-word of scandal. I sullied that glorious land with my debauchery. I had expected to find amusement in the spectacle of another universe; but to see those virgin marvels, eyes were needed such as I no longer had. Thoughts of my native country pursued me in those savage parts, and cast a shadow over the beauties of nature. So it was that I found nothing under that new sun, of which my heart was not already weary! Amid that strange and joyous scenery, went on the old monotonous duel between man and woman, as vain a duel as in the old world, and as it is there, false and cruel. Once more I played my insipid part. The comedy in which I had been impersonating the same character for so many years, gained nothing by a change of booth. I put out the theatre lights, I got rid of my paint and mask, and turned, like a player thirsting for greatness, to ask a little liberty and silence from solitude.

"There is a wholesome bitterness in exile. Loneliness inspired me with new thoughts. I sounded the depths of my destiny. Where was I after so many varied fortunes? I was thirty years old, yet had more experience than a grandfather. Born rich, handsome, powerful, and of illustrious house, fate had loaded me with favours. What joys could I lack?

"I went over the list, and the outcome was this: of all this life of

superb magnificence, there remained to me the memory of one hour. The most envied queens of love, whether dames of lofty lineage, or shameless courtezans, had cloyed me; a child haunted me with her charm. Drinking of her kisses had only filled me with the thirst for more.

"I understood, then, that to people the desert where my grief was gnawing me, Elvira alone would suffice. Don't draw the hasty conclusion that my eyes were really unsealed. I thought of that night's bliss with the selfish regret of a drinker whose cup has fallen from his hand, while still full, and it was myself only I pitied as I dwelt on that broken marriage bond. I called up the form of Elvira, in all its fragile beauty and grace. With a lover's rapture I pictured that pure image, and I cursed the stupid pride that had let me depart unsatiated. Why had I been in such haste to flee? I had dreaded the after-taste; but suppose the dream had been prolonged? May be there are a few natures who have a conceivable to-morrow, and whose faith stands the test of time. Suppose the woman I had abandoned was one of those? Suppose I, the insatiable, had passed such a joy on one side, without draining it to the last drop!

"I stirred the ashes of my heart: a terrible fire lay smouldering there. I tried to rally myself, as of old. Was I thus going to fall in love with my wife, I, Don Juan Tenorio? I made an effort to drive away the troublesome phantom; it quietly persisted in haunting me. I had to give up lying to myself. What I needed was to find myself once more in Elvira's arms. My longing was intense. According to my steward's advices, the Duchess, my wife, had left the mansion the very day of my departure, to take refuge with her mother. A recent letter had brought me news of the sudden death of Doña Andrea. The Marchioness of Montalvo was no more; her child's misfortune had hastened her end.

"I would set out at once for Pulgar! I would lay the love that absence had not conquered at the feet of the inconsolable orphan, the abandoned wife. To see her again, Don Juan would cross the high seas! What woman would not have given all her tears as the price for such homage?

"How long the voyage seemed to me! Never having been kept waiting until then, I did not know the charm of far off things. Life had pitilessly spoiled me. While gorging me with immediate joy, it had kept me from

experiencing the one illusion that embellishes it : sad and divine hope. I was as astonished as a child at the Inevitable, and the delay which chastized my impatience, filled me with a sort of anger. When I was at my journey's end, all that these hours of trial left behind was a brutish longing and the false shame of finding myself mastered.

"With dry eyes, I once more looked on the home I had left.

"It was evening. The sharp and icy blast of November littered the soil of Pulgar with leaves; the park that had witnessed Elvira's confession of love, was the hapless prey of autumn. Things seemed at my baleful coming, to veil themselves in a melancholy more sombre than before. Through having been its guest, I knew every corner of the dwelling; without meeting a soul I made my way to Elvira's chamber.

"She was leaning with an air of weakness against the sill of a window open to the night air.

" 'Miguel!' she shrieked.

"Not a syllable more did she utter. She stood there terrified and motionless. I could see her tortured heart beating under her wimple, and hear the rustle of her trembling hands against the silk of her dress.



"I looked for tears at the worst. This dumb stupor vexed me. I had no knowledge of souls of this temper. I staked my life in that minute.

" 'I am called Don Juan,' I answered.

"I made a step towards her; she turned paler than woman ever turned. 'I am the widow of Count de Ercilla,' she said.

" 'You are my wife.'

" 'Alas, I know it—'

"Wasted and faded through weeping, she seemed, the image of woe. I dared to speak to her of her beauty. Shame set her face all aflame.

" 'For pity's sake be silent,' she begged. 'If you are a Christian, you will leave me!'

"Fancying she was giving way, I held out my arms.

" 'Elvira, you are mine! I pine for you— Remember your oaths at the foot of the altar—'

"And I added, without thinking of the blasphemy : "'I love you—do you understand?'"

"'Do your worst!' was her answer.

"And crossing her hands over her bosom, without a cry, or a gesture, still and frozen, she awaited my will.

"Yes, Chevalier, I did it : I outraged my wife! Was it not my right? Too weak to struggle, too proud to summon her attendants, Elvira yielded to me, all cold and faint. But it was only the mere remnant of herself. In vain my kisses sought out hers; horror and contempt held her lips close sealed. Her very abandonment was a sort of refusal—when she fainted away, half-dead, you would have said that beauty had accompanied love in its flight from that ill-used form. My rage changed to dismay, and I fled as cowards flee—"

Don Juan was silent, his voiced failed him.

"Do you care to hear the end," he murmured.

"Oh! tell me all, I entreat you."

The lord of Miremonde leant his waxen brow on his hand and slowly brought his sad story to a close.

* * *

"This was a last straw, and one I had not foreseen. The strength of which I was so proud had been shivered against an invisible power. There was something here below, higher still than my will, and nature was of no avail against certain souls. This puny child had not even done me the honour of resisting. Caught in the close grip of my arms she had kept her real self free and aloof. The pride of Don Juan lay low crushed under her disdain. Remembering then in what fashion Elvira yielded, when she did in earnest, I compared the fruitless horror of this outrage to that never-to-be-forgotten hour of love, regret for which served me as a sort of remorse. From the heaven I had caught one glimpse of I was banished for ever. Whatever human feeling was left in my heart, vanished before the breath of despair, and I sank in depths of ignominy.

"Here begins a period of my life, whose mud it is unseemly to stir up. Become the buffoon of my own vices, I lost even that native high-breeding

which had made me illustrious in my orgies. I made myself drunk on the grossest beverages, and stunned myself with the vilest noises.

"One night, I was giving a supper in my palace at Seville. Don Juan's friends were in the midst of their diversion; my poorest jokes evoked peals of laughter; suddenly one of my domestics gave into my hands a letter, with



a black seal. I looked for some pious exhortation, of a sort I used to be always receiving, and I requested silence. I wished to offer my guests the treat of a little reading out loud. The loveliest of my fair neighbours lent me a pin from her hair to break the seal. I opened the letter—and from the very first word, I read it to myself! It ran thus: I know it by heart. Every line of it is graven on my memory as on a tombstone:

"'Farewell, Miguel, my dear husband! Receive my soul. Those who have tended me in my misery, wanted to dictate words of hatred to me; they called you by some name I know not— Listen to a thing—you ought to know: I have never ceased to cherish the thought of you! I have madly longed for your return— The man who came back one night was not you. But him, too, I pardon. Why did you crush me? I belonged to you. I was your wife and your servant. You should have quietly bidden me: I would have obeyed— We shall see each other no more, my Miguel! Learn at least how you were beloved.

ELVIRA'

"It was too much. A sudden light poured in on me, and I saw the whole

horror of my crime. Elvira's farewell dropping from my hands, fell among the stale finery of the table, covered with goblets and flowers. In what unknown spot did she lie dying? I arose to hasten thither. I should find a way to save and regain possession of her!

"Still the abominable roystering continued round me.

" 'Well, Don Juan, what about your letter?' said one. 'We are listening.'

"At this echo of the past, my reason fled.

" 'Away with the lot of you,' I yelled.

"And I fell sword in hand on my guests; the crowd melted away, affrighted. Every one made off to spread the news that Don Juan was stricken with madness. Leporello, beside himself with terror, crawled to my feet.

" 'Who gave you this letter?' I asked him.

" 'A Franciscan father, my lord.'

" 'Do you know the monk?' Come, speak out.'

" 'Yes, master, but you forbade me to utter his name in your presence—'

" 'Ottavio,' I cried.

"I was being requited by my old foes. To pardon me was all very well for Elvira, but Doña Anna pardoned not. I was at the mercy of her hate. Be it so! I would go and humble myself at Ottavio's feet! He had suffered, had this man, and could understand. My only hope was in his pity.

"I hastened to the convent of Saint Francis. It was plunged in sleep. I



called, I threatened: no answer. At length the door of the old cemetery yielded under my blows; I broke in upon the peace of the dead with my cries. The grating of a tomb barred my passage. On the summit of the magnificent mausoleum, the statue of the Commander Ulloa stood out white in the moonlight. Yet another that I had forgotten! What did he want with me? The horror of the sight of him compelled me to silence.

" 'As if I could spare a thought for you,' I muttered, and seized with a fit of sacrilegious rage, I shook my fist at the effigy of the

murdered man. Then I thought I saw—was it a chimæra or a miracle?—his arm of stone slowly lowered. This dread gesture pointed to a tomb. My eyes obeyed, and I read these words, graven on a block of marble, bathed in a livid ray of moonlight :

ELVIRA, DUCHESS TENORIO,
AGED EIGHTEEN.

"I uttered a cry that I can hear even now.

"A hand was laid on my shoulder : Ottavio stood before me.

" 'We buried her there, beside him,' he said. 'Are you at last sick of your crimes, this time?'

" 'Of what crimes do you speak? I only know one. What are the others to me? I scoff at your melodramatic grief. A fig for your statue. Mere emptiness, and lies!'

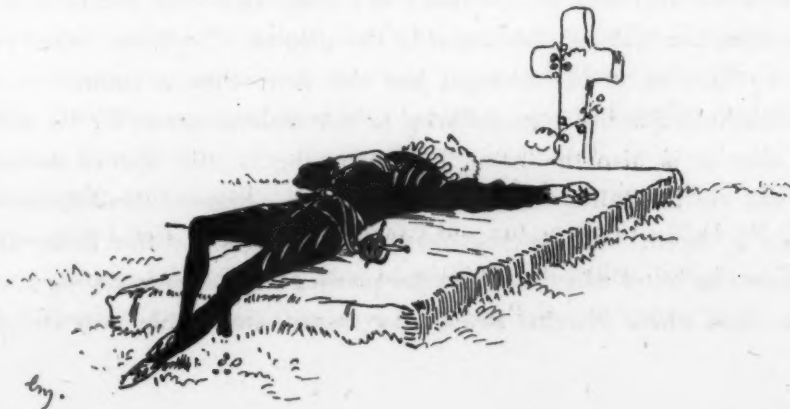
"My mind had clean left me; I rushed forward to overturn the statue, whose icy majesty insulted me. This mad effort brought me to the ground. With stiffened limbs, and foaming at the mouth, I swooned on Elvira's tomb. Some grave diggers found me there in the morning; they carried me to my palace, taking me for dead.

"It was in very truth on that night that Don Juan died"

The narrator, having said his say, was silent.

The night came to a close with his story. The first ray of dawn that blazoned the panes awoke the larks around Miremonde. Standing at the open window, Pons gazed in admiration upon the sunrise, and his heart, purged of its old perilous stuff, drank in its fill of a new enlightenment.

HENRY LAUJOL.





THE COMÉDIE-FRANÇAISE

MADAME BARETTA-WORMS

The poet said that the finest epitaph you could inscribe on the tomb of a woman of Rome was this simple verse :

Domi mansit : lanam fecit.

You could say of Mademoiselle Baretta, now Madame Worms, that her whole biography is resumed in one line : she kept to her own fireside and was an actress of comedy. There is no existence more even than hers, none more devoid of events, more destitute of the unexpected. It seems as though she had abandoned herself to a current that has borne her along, and, with an imperceptible and ceaseless movement, without hitch or accident, has brought her quietly from the Conservatoire to the Odéon, and from the Odéon to the Comédie-Française. Once at the Comédie-Française, she has mounted step by step, with the approbation of the public, from the humble rank of "Pensionnaire" to that of "Sociétaire," and one of these days we shall see her, without any fuss, and with her little tranquil and engaging air, taking possession of the title of "Doyenne," that Fortune will bring her, as it has brought her the rest, with a smile.

Mademoiselle Baretta,—let us keep to her maiden name, for the sufficient reason that it is also the name by which she is still known behind the scenes and on the bills,—Mademoiselle Baretta (Blanche-Rose-Marie-Hélène) was born in April, 1856, in the old town of Avignon. Her father kept an hotel there, an hotel which boasted the privilege of accommodating travellers with the room where Marshal Brune was assassinated. She was still a mere

child when her father decided to leave the provinces in order to come and carry on his old profession in Paris. He settled in the Rue Saint-Honoré. It chanced that not far off lived Mademoiselle Sarah Bernhardt's family. The latter, Mademoiselle Baretta, and her sister (since dead) often had the opportunity of seeing, and they became intimate with her. Mademoiselle Sarah Bernhardt who, as yet, was only little Sarah, was a pupil at the Conservatoire. What could she have to talk about with her two girl-friends, if not the Conservatoire whither she went to take her lessons, and the stage where she was dreaming of making a great name for herself? Such things are quite enough to turn a young girl's brain. These stories and fancy pictures fired the imagination of Blanche, the younger of the pair. In the school she was attending to finish her education, they kept her at reading poetry, a task in which she acquitted herself with rare skill. Already she had the elocutionary instinct. She still remembers a certain day of triumph when the Curé, after having accorded her a kindly hearing, gave her a friendly little tap on the cheek, with the words, "You will make your way, my child." The worthy man little dreamt, I dare say, that she would make her way as far as the Comédie-Française.

There, nevertheless, did she arrive, but what will doubtless astonish you is that she gave her first proofs there at eight years of age—yes, there is no mistake, at eight. They were casting about for some intelligent little girl to play, in the *Supplice d'une Femme*, the part of the child to whom her father has to bring the birthday gift of a lovely doll. Who recommended her to the author I know not, but she took his fancy and was selected. You see it was a case of predestination.

At the age of twelve years and five months, she competed for admission to the classes at the Conservatoire; she was admitted, and Beauvallet, her future professor, seeing her so thin and puny, cried out, with his customary brutality: "What next, I wonder, are they going to put babies out to nurse here?"

She stayed four years. The ordinary course extends over three only. But she had entered in 1868, and the war year disorganised all arrangements. She came out with the second prize; public judgment awarded her the first, but not so the jury. It was one of those little cases of

pass-over which are by no means rare in the history of prize competitions. The press was unanimous in protesting against this injustice, which was, however, not without its compensation for its victim, for it at once brought her name into relief and gained for her many sympathies. It was written that everything should turn to her profit, even her disappointments. This particular one, for that matter, was nothing very grievous. A prize at the Conservatoire is such a trifle in the career of an artist!

The moment had arrived for Mademoiselle Baretta to sign an engagement. On the verge of so serious a responsibility being undertaken, her family hesitated. They were held back by scruples not difficult to account for, if you will only remember that they had come from the old capital of the Popes. The Curé of the parish (the same, very likely, who had predicted a brilliant fortune for the child,) protested in anger. "What else could you do with me?" said the girl. "You will never be able to find me a husband, since I have no dowry."

"That is true enough, anyhow," said the father, "we have no dowry to give her."

"Then let me earn one for myself," was the plucky rejoinder.

This logic was irresistible, and she was allowed to accept the engagement offered her by the manager of the Odéon.

It was in September, 1872, that she made her first appearance there in a piece altogether forgotten now, the *Salamandre*, by Édouard Plouvier; a first appearance so modest as to be remarked only by a few connoisseurs. She was not one of those who, by some brilliant stroke, carry renown at the very first onset. She had slowly, and spectator by spectator, to conquer the favour of the public. By a curious irony of fate, it was not at her own theatre, but at the Vaudeville, which had borrowed her from the Odéon, that she, next year, scored her first real success. Barrière, who was mounting a piece of his own, *Dianah*, was looking out for a feminine type which Mademoiselle Baretta seemed to him to realise. He offered her the part, and she accepted it. The drama was not of the best and only half-succeeded, but the new-comer won all hearts.

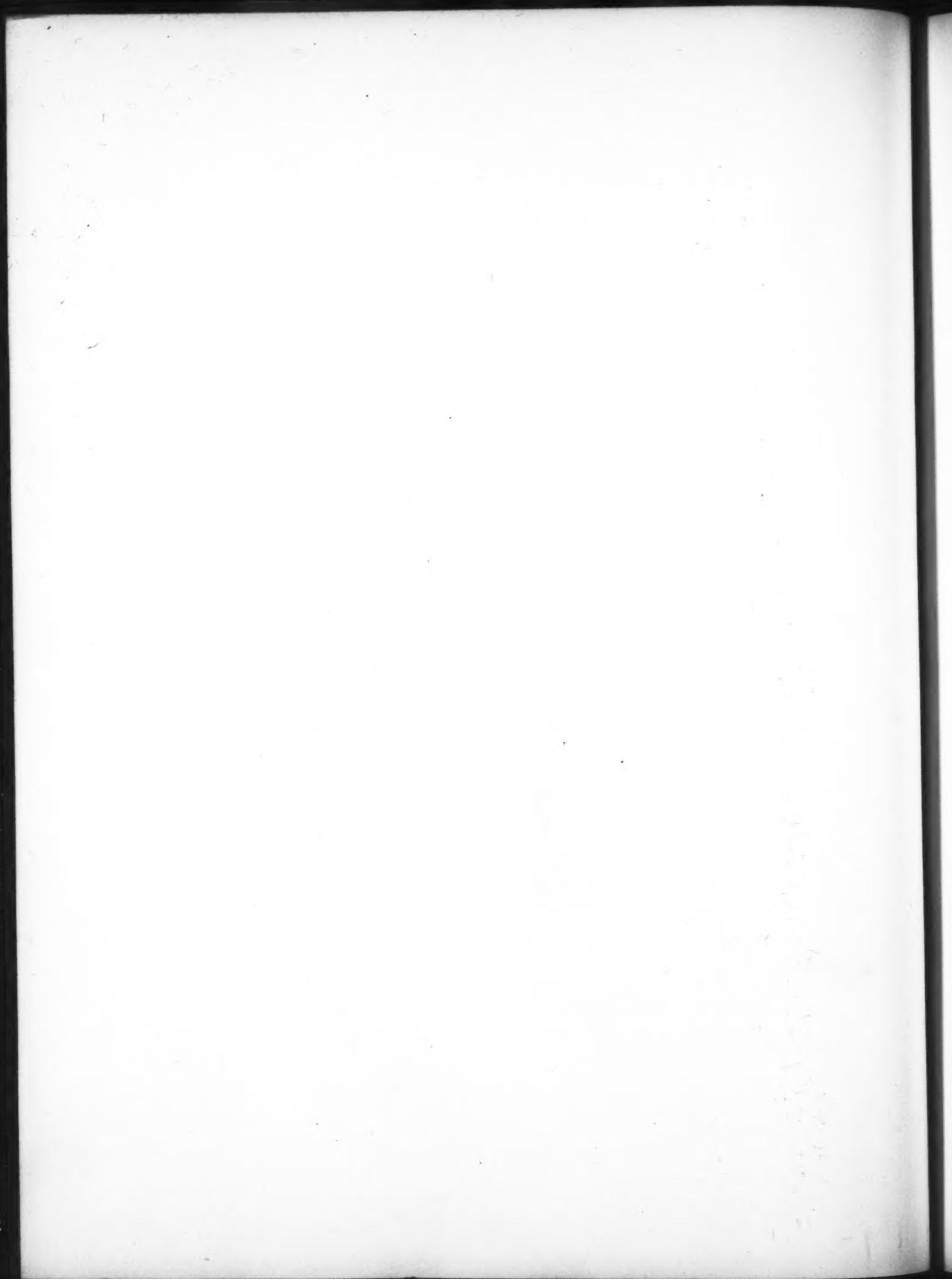
I must ask pardon for quoting myself; but it gratifies me to turn up in my old critical notices the impression, all hot and hot, of the moment.



Chalot, phot.

MADAME BARETTA.

(COMEDIE FRANÇAISE.)



This, then, is what I wrote the day after the first representation : "The Odéon has lent the Vaudeville its *ingénue*, Mademoiselle Baretta. She is adorable in her maidenly grace, her timid gaiety, and her tender melancholy. It can hardly be said that she is very pretty; she is something much better than that. She is charming, or rather she is a charmer. To exquisite natural gifts she adds an elocutionary art which would be noteworthy on any stage you please. She is one of the first *ingénues* in Paris."

You see I was not sparing in my praise. But no one accused me of being too lavish. The public were in ecstasies. The following year was marked by an incident which amused all Paris, and furnished forth an ample stock of newspaper gossip as well as food for the "revues" at the end of the year. Three theatres at once fell to performing the *École des Femmes*; three representatives of Agnès, vied with each other for the first prize, Mademoiselle Reichenberg at the Comédie-Française, Mademoiselle Baretta at the Odéon, and Mademoiselle Maria Legault at the Gymnase. The apple was awarded to Mademoiselle Reichenberg, who was acknowledged by all good judges to have distanced both her rivals. Mademoiselle Baretta, who later on was destined to adapt herself to the old repertory, was not yet, despite her seductive qualities, equal to playing it well. Her slightly "precious" charm, her archness dashed with pathos, her pretty little air of artful mischief mingled with romantic melancholy, that had enchanted us when she had only to deliver the lines of a Barrière, seemed inadequate when applied to the robust work of the master-hand.

Mademoiselle Baretta had not yet the breadth of style demanded by the characters of classic comedy. She was at that time,—for she has since, by dint of hard work and by amplifying her method, acquired greater scope and authority,—she was at that time, I say, a praiseworthy and amiable representative of the middle-class of the day. Until 1875 she remained at the Odéon playing all the parts in her own line, Marianne in *Tartuffe*, Isabelle in the *École des Maris*, Diane in the *Marquis de Villemer*, and even Zacharie in Racine's *Athalie*; but where she was more seductive still, for she was there herself, was in Geneviève in the *Jalousie paternelle* or Camille in *la Demoiselle à marier*, two old-fashioned pieces of Scribe's which had been revived a little on her account, I fancy, and in which she

was charming. Or to put it more correctly, when she played Molière's Marianne or Isabelle, it was always Scribe's Geneviève or Camille you really saw. She cut down all the great parts of the classic repertory to suit her own height and style; she was always and throughout Mademoiselle Baretta, an *ingénue* of the latter part of the nineteenth century, born in the room where they had assassinated Marshal Brune.

M. Perrin held the old repertory in but slight account. For the qualities it demands he had little esteem. It is probable that Mademoiselle Baretta attracted him by that very modern and personal accent with which she endowed all her characters. He engaged her, and it was on the 22nd of June, 1875, that she made her first appearance at the Comédie-Française as Henriette in the *Femmes savantes*, and, a month later, as Angélique in the *Malade imaginaire*.

The charm worked as effectively in the Rue Richelieu as at the Odéon. By her fresh cast of countenance, the grace of her smile and the sweetness of her delivery, she delighted a public fond of new faces, and prone to sudden enthusiasms. Steady-going old playgoers reserved their opinion; they waited to see Mademoiselle Baretta in some work which would go better than Molière's with the particular turn of her talent. M. Perrin revived for her Sedaine's *Philosophe sans le savoir*, and allotted her the delicious part of Victorine. As every one knows, what constitutes the exquisite charm of the character is its light-hearted thoughtlessness. Victorine is a good-natured little girl, all simplicity and tenderness, who is in love without knowing it, and who weeps, as she says herself, because girls often do weep, without knowing why. Mademoiselle Baretta transformed the aspect of the part; she gave proof in it of that nervous sensibility, a trifle overwrought and slightly factitious withal, which was the characteristic of her talent. Not a trace of calmness or breadth could she impart to her acting.

As a set-off, this complex and feverish grace served her marvellously well in the same kind of part, when they revived Madame Sand's *Mariage de Victorine*. This time she was the dramatist's heroine to the life. She was enthusiastically recalled after each act, and two months later she was nominated a "Sociétaire" (29th of May, 1876).

Mademoiselle Baretta passed, as a sequel to this triumph, through a phase, I will not say of eclipse, but of waiting. The majority of the artists at the Comédie-Française have known their years of dearth; not a single new part to create; nothing but revivals, nothing but the stock-repertory—you languish in inaction, you mark time on one spot. You get used-up in doing nothing, and what you do falls short of the expectation.

We saw Mademoiselle Baretta, at the revival of Émile Augier's *Paul Forestier*, assume the part of Camille, created in the old days by Madame Victoria Lafontaine. She seemed to us in it a mere chit of a girl. Again, in the *Été de la Saint-Martin*, she took the sympathetic part of Adrienne, in which Mademoiselle Croizette had left such bewitching recollections behind her. The public remarked, with as much surprise as vexation, that the character was, as it were, reduced to a nullity in the hands of the new "Sociétaire." When Adrienne was seen in the person of Mademoiselle Croizette, the part was played as one of the very first rank; Mademoiselle Baretta brought it down to the level of a Vaudeville *ingénue*. The element of narrowness and insignificance in her acting shewed no signs of improvement.

Into the antique repertory she imported a somewhat mannered grace. I wrote on the morrow of a representation of the *Barbier de Séville* (June, 1877): "Mademoiselle Baretta is an actress who stamps her own personality upon every part she plays. Whether it be Rosine or Henriette, or Agnès or Victorine she is representing, she makes a Baretta of each of them. She endows them all with pretty little refinements of "precious" simplicity, with engaging ways, a caressing voice, and a roguish smile. Nothing is less suited to Rosine, who is as impulsive and straightforward as the actress is full of mischief and artfulness. No, beyond a doubt, she is not Rosine at all. Yet she is none the less charming. It is not correct to say that Mademoiselle Baretta is graceful, she is grace personified, grace which does not get off, it is true, without a dash of affectation, which rather plays at frankness than is really frank, which gives the sensation of certain delicious and heady perfumes like heliotrope or sandal-wood, while Mademoiselle Reichenberg sets one thinking more of the rose, whose scent is cleaner. I admit that the seduction she exercises

is disquieting, it irritates quite as much as it charms; with all that it is not to be withstood."

"Sa grâce est la plus forte,"

as Alceste says of Célimène, and Alceste goes on to flatter himself that he will purge the mind of his coquettish mistress of these vices of the time. It was an Alceste also who wrought a considerable and happy influence upon the talent of Mademoiselle Baretta; she married her comrade Worms, who is not only an excellent comedian, but is also one of the best masters of elocution and one of the cleverest stage managers we have in Paris.

The marriage took place in 1883, but I fancy that long before this final step, Mademoiselle Baretta had more than once consulted the man she meant to wed, and that she had gained from him much good advice. She had given the direction of her talent into the hands of her future husband, before entrusting him with herself.

Whether it was the result of spontaneous labour or of a professor's lessons, one thing certain is that we saw Mademoiselle Baretta, even before she became Madame Worms, gradually disengage herself from her petty mannerism and rise to the level of simplicity. A kind of evolution took place in her talent, the progress of which was followed by connoisseurs with an attentive and delighted eye. Among the parts she played at this period must be mentioned, first and foremost, Céline in the *Aventurière*, in which she displayed an adorable innocence, maidenly, tender, and spirited withal, Suzanne in the *Mariage de Figaro* in which she was gay and *verdissante*, to borrow the expression of Beaumarchais himself, and Barberine in Alfred de Musset's *Quenouille*, wherein she was at once pathetic and piquant.

The authority she was acquiring over the public was continually on the increase; the Tuesday and Thursday subscribers had taken a great fancy to her, and M. Perrin, who liked her habit of striking a modern note in old parts, kept her well to the front. Every year her share as a "Sociétaire" was being increased by one-twelfth, and I was forced to draw attention, in the press, to the fact that Mademoiselle Reichenberg, the *ingénue* in chief, was not only gifted with a talent of infinitely greater



Cable photo
MADAME BARETTA'S DRESSING ROOM
AT THE COMEDIE FRANÇAISE



breadth, but had the amplitude of style requisite for the antique repertory.

I waged no war against her; for I esteemed her talent at its just value; but I felt some sort of reaction was needed against an enthusiasm that appeared to me excessive. I had to give in just like the others, and to applaud her without reserve as the arch Casilda in *Ruy Blas*, whom none has played or will play like her, as Hélène in *Mademoiselle de la Seiglière*, as Angélique in the *Malade imaginaire*, a part which she made an ideal creation, and lastly as that very Rosine in the *Barbier de Séville* in which I had formerly fallen foul of her. And as I have quoted my criticism of 1877, I must needs give as a contrast the article I wrote six years later, on the morrow of a revival of this same *Barbier*.

"Madame Baretta-Worms, as Rosine, is perfection itself, the ideal of the part. *Ingénues* always fancy that Rosine is a mere mischievous, teasing girl, eager to befool her guardian and taking a perverse delight in playing tricks on him. They lay stress on the impish qualities ascribed to the character by Beaumarchais, and underline them. As far as they can they turn Rosine into a sort of vixen in the callow stage, something in the style of that little nuisance of a Bachellery in *Numa Roumestan*.

"Rosine is a good girl, entirely maidenly and modest, simple in heart, and upright in mind. She only condescends to the little tricks by whose aid she deceives her guardian under the pressure of stern necessity. She says so herself: 'My excuse is in my unhappy plight,' and elsewhere; 'I am far from possessing that knowledge of the world which gives a woman assurance in all junctures. But an unjust man would end by making innocence itself a trickster.' Innocence itself, there you have the characteristic of the part.

"This maiden innocence, sweet grace, light-hearted and gentle simplicity, Mademoiselle Baretta has rendered without effort; for such are the amiable qualities that make up her talent. Study her in this part; there is not one gesture, not one movement of the features, not one inflexion of the voice, that is not perfectly true, that does not reveal in this pretty Rosine one of the most charming creations of our stage, the soul

of tenderness and modesty, timid even in her mischief, joyously expanding under the influence of love, but instinct with feelings of honour, the perfection of Frenchwomen! A part interpreted in this way is something divine!"

I would willingly pause on this note! But for the past year we have seen Madame Baretta making slowly and quietly in the direction of another line of characters, that of first *jeunes premières*, and coquettes, a line which seems to her, I suppose, more brilliant than that of *ingénues*. Thus she has recently undertaken the part of Camille in *On ne badine pas avec l'amour*, the Marquise de Presles in the *Gendre de Monsieur Poirier*, and Sylvia in *le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard*.

I neither can nor will say anything as yet about this new ambition of hers. I fear that Madame Worms with her smiling, affable manner of the middle-class type is not over well adapted for the impersonation of high-bred dames. And in fact, up to the present, she has only shewn in those unaccustomed parts, intelligent grace, and keen desire to do well, ill served by inadequate physical means.

But she has once already overcome our resistance. Doubtless she will succeed yet again in her project and in any case she will be able to say with the poet :

" Et si de t'agréer je n'emporte le prix,
J'aurai du moins l'honneur de l'avoir entrepris."

MADEMOISELLE MARIE MULLER

I can still see her as, for the first time, she made her appearance before us, in July, 1880, at the Conservatoire competition in a scene from *Il ne faut jurer de rien*. The resemblance struck every one in the house; here was the girl in Greuze's *Cruche cassée*! She was not yet fifteen, with tresses of an ideal blond, a pretty baby face, and an aspect of candour in her whole appearance that set one thinking of Victor Hugo's verses when he speaks of the child :

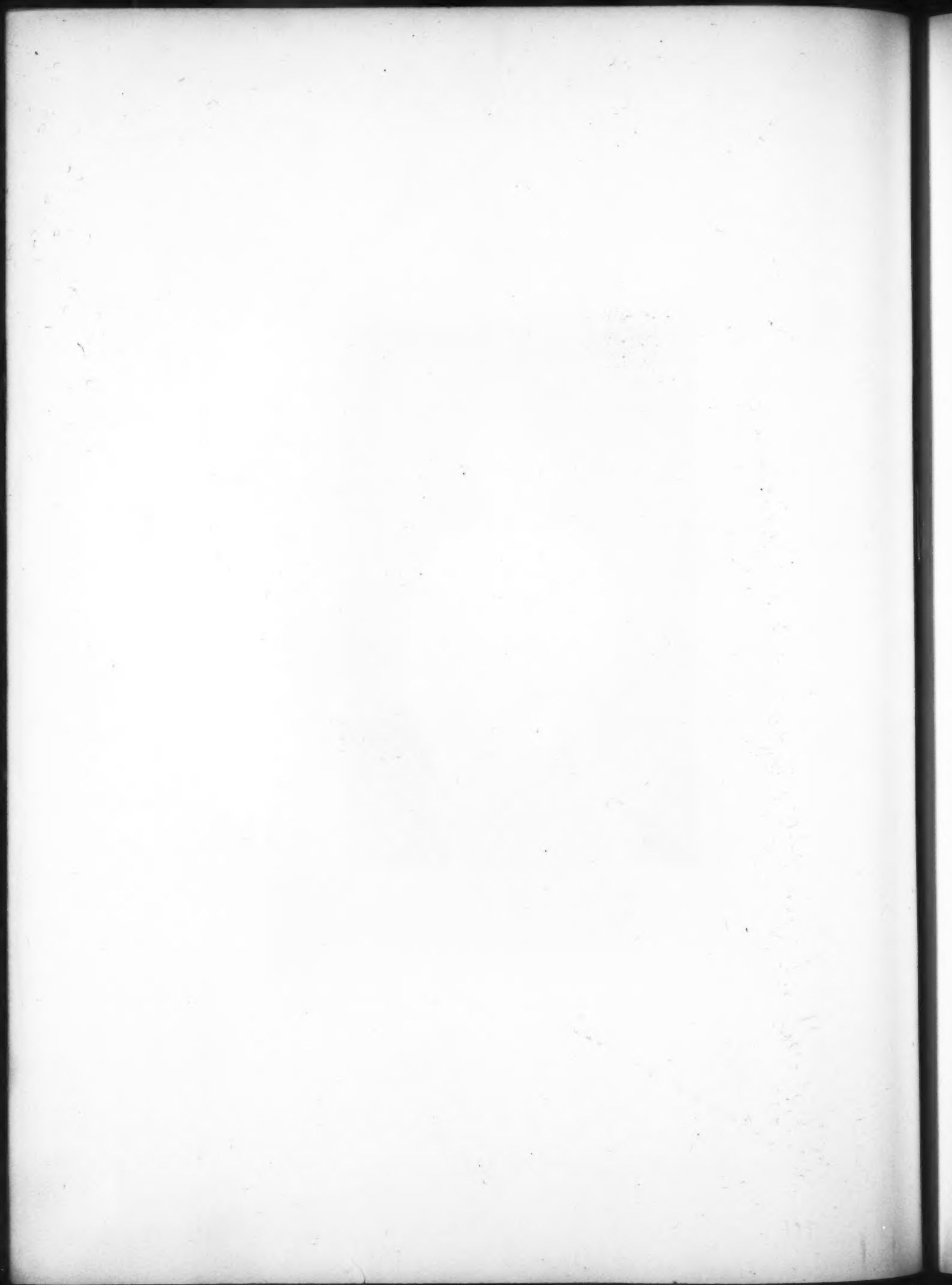
" Laissant errer sa vue étonnée et ravie
Offrant de toutes parts sa jeune âme à la vie
Et sa bouche aux baisers."



Chalot phot

MADemoisELLE MÜLLER

COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE



Such a mere child was she that they only gave her a second accessit, notwithstanding that she had enchanted the public, who are apt to let themselves be captivated by external advantages. The following year we again saw her in the character of Sylvia. She! Sylvia! She was just a little statuette of Dresden china, but such a very, very pretty one! No one gave a thought to what she was reciting, every eye was fixed on her with admiration; this time she took the first accessit. Finally, a year later, she chose in Marivaux's *Épreuve nouvelle* the classic scene wherein the *ingénue*, finding that it is not herself who is beloved, lets fall the bouquet given her by the man whom she had thought to be her lover. This scene is always sure of its effect on the stage, and the humblest beginner cannot fail, with the gesture I have mentioned, to take the house by storm. You cannot form any idea of the exquisite simplicity, the naive grace of this pretty doll. It was a case of charm, of sheer witchery.

They gave her the second prize on the spot, and M. Perrin did not wait for her to compete for the first. He engaged her then and there; she was not yet eighteen.

Four of five months later, she made her first appearance in the delicious part of Rosette, the poor little rustic maiden with whom Perdican trifles so cruelly in *On ne badine pas avec l'amour*. She bewitched the Tuesday and Thursday public with her big, clear, frank eyes, her naive and engaging ways, her innocent style, as she had captivated us all at the Conservatoire. People thought they had lighted upon a rival to Mademoiselle Reichenberg. Mademoiselle Reichenberg gave no sign of taking umbrage, and when they talked to her about the new-comer :

"She is very pretty," was the answer, "very pretty indeed."

She played Cécile in *Il ne faut jurer de rien*, and it was very pretty, very pretty indeed; she played Agnès in the *École des femmes*, and was again very pretty, very pretty indeed; not a touch of poetry in the part of Cécile, no breadth in that of Agnès, but prettiness, slight and ladylike prettiness.

It was after having seen her as Marianne in *l'Avare* that M. J.-J. Weiss, the critic of the *Journal des Débats*, wrote this terrible sentence : "The

pretty dollishness of her person which first attracted the public may quite possibly turn against her one of these days." That day has not yet come, and I sincerely trust it never will. The truth is, however, that she has only been acceptable in second-rate parts, requiring nothing but naive grace or a piquant spirit of frolic; she was charming as Fanchette in the *Mariage de Figaro*, as Peblo, the young novice, in *Don Juan d'Autriche*, as one of the minxes in the *Coupe enchantée*. Perhaps she was a trifle too slight for Diane de Xaintrailles in the *Marquis de Villemer* and for Blanche in *Les Fourchambault*.

She still deserves all the praise that has been lavished on her, and her charming little person still justifies the enthusiasm of which she has been the object. But she has been content, as the military phrase has it, to mark time, and when an important part has to be allotted in a new piece, it is still to Mademoiselle Reichenberg that recourse is had. Pailleron wanted for his *Souris* a very young girl unconscious of her own heart and scarce emancipated from her convent-school; it was just the thing for Mademoiselle Muller; he preferred Mademoiselle Reichenberg who is old enough to be "Doyenne" of the company. Why?—for he doubtless had his reasons.—He had his reasons and he acted with reason.

But Mademoiselle Muller is none the less a very pretty bit of Dresden ware!

FRANCISQUE SARCEY.





ART
AT
THE "MIRLITONS" CLUB

1860-1888

The Art-loving public of Paris did not express any excessive disappointment on hearing that the Annual Exhibition of the Cercle de l'Union Artistique would not be held as usual, in the Place Vendôme, but in the galleries in the Rue de Sèze. There, or here, still it was the "Mirli-ton." They met under the same sign, and such a sign! Besides visitors are not sent far afield; and even if the Exhibition had been forced

to find a home beyond the frontiers, I know people who would travel more than a hundred leagues to see a Meissonier or a Gérôme, a Detaille or a Carolus-Duran.

But inside the club it was a different thing. The question of removal was within an ace of stirring up a storm in the cup of liquorice-water (*coco*) which the club affords gratuitously to its members. The Painting Committee, with M. Meissonier at its head, insisted on exhibiting in its old rooms, and refused to give in. 'In vain did the club management say to them: "The gallery is not to be had. The members of the Cercle des Champs-Élysées with which we have amalgamated have moved into these rooms. They have grown accustomed to them. Their tables are set out there—the tables on which they play their favourite games, placid piquet or soothing bezique. You could not have the heart to disturb these worthy gentlemen!"

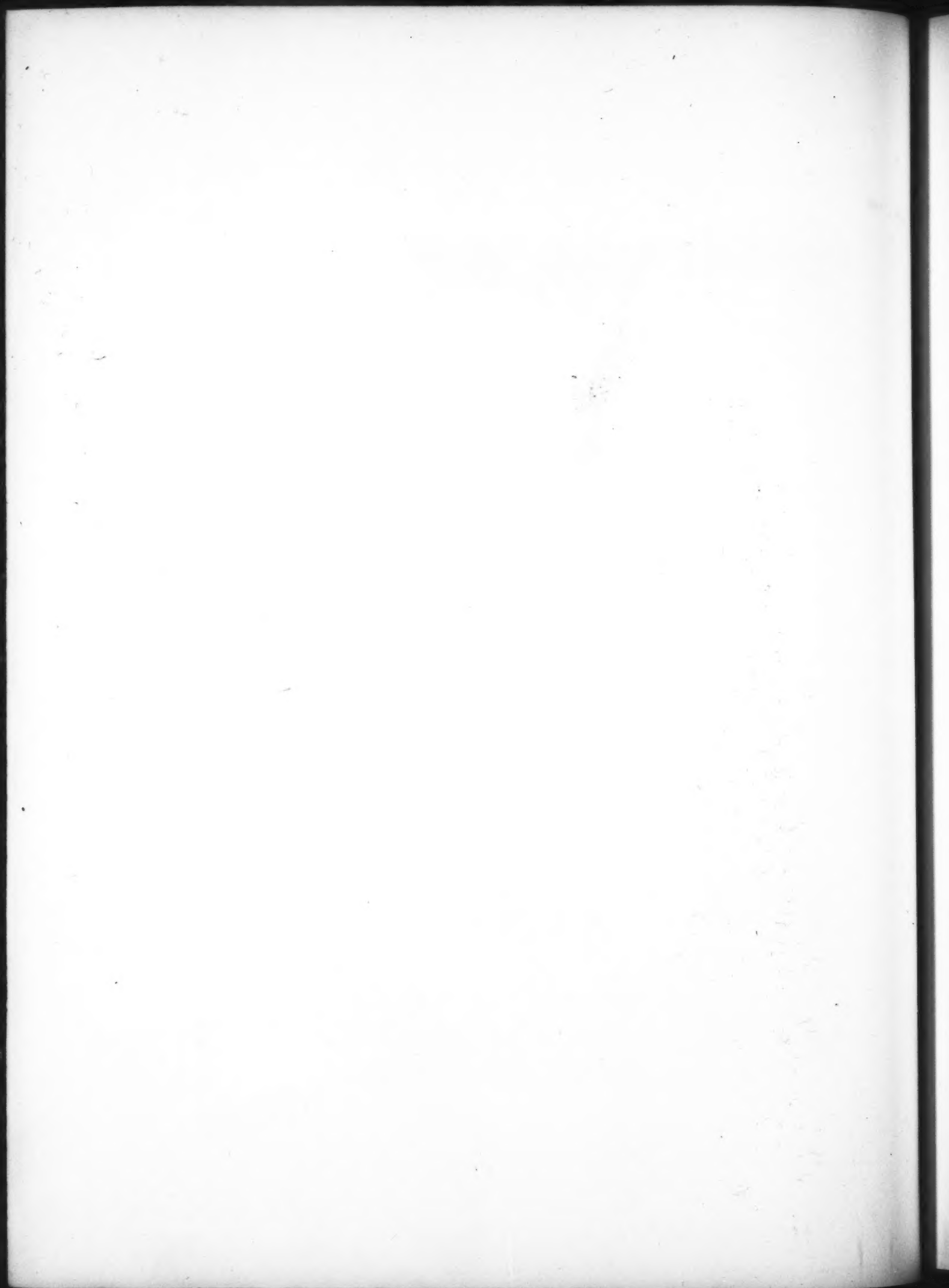
All through these appeals M. Meissonier would sit with one hand buried in his sea-god's beard, nodding his head, and never yielding an inch to these sentimental arguments.

Then various schemes were discussed. One suggested covering in the inner court-yard of the club house. Another enquired whether it might not be possible to rent the shed-buildings of the Tuileries. In short, no one knew what would come of it, till one fine day M. Meissonier, beaten by the objurgations of his colleagues, and convinced that there would be room and light enough for the pictures, withdrew his *non possumus*. This act of courteous renunciation was hailed with shouts of joy in the club, and, if I may be allowed so daring a figure of speech, I would say that the pool rubbed its hands with satisfaction.

And now, behold the reaction of human opinion. One artist, who had thought that ruin would ensue if they could not exhibit in the Place Vendôme, after this, said with great contempt: "The old gallery lost all its prestige when Pranzini used it to make his female acquaintance there. Long live the Salle de la Rue de Sèze!"

And now that the Cercle de l'Union Artistique has actually moved from the Place Vendôme, we, too, may frankly admit that the gallery there never met the requirements of enlightened artists, who thought—forgive the





jest—that their pictures had not light enough. Besides, the space was restricted, and it was a thing to see how they sighed as they remembered the first incarnation assumed by their club : that nomad institution which now is migrating to the Champs-Élysées, but which in its infancy had such a pretty and attractive home in the house in the Rue de Choiseul!

The Rue de Choiseul! What memories the name calls up in the mind of every Parisian who has reached man's estate! In these days the principle of amalgamation which made the "Mirlitons" distinctively original, has become part of the manners of our time,—the mingling, that is to say, under the roof of a single club, of the artistic and "society" elements;—but in 1860 this was regarded as an eccentricity, a sort of wager, certain to be lost as soon as laid.

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The first beginnings of the formation of this society arose from a mute protest, not against the improvements of the equine race, but against the tedious style of conversation to which it leads. Weary of hearing everlasting discussions in the club drawing-rooms, as to the performances of *Gladiateurs* to come or the *Filles de l'air* of the future, certain young men of fashion came to the conclusion that if they could find a snug and quiet place where they might discuss literature, art, and music, and gather about them some choice artistic spirits, they might find a very pleasant way of spending the two or three heavy hours before dinner, and the sixty minutes between midnight and one in the morning, when a man likes to take the stiffness out of his tongue after coming from the play, or some fashionable musical party.

"*A tout seigneur, tout honneur,*" and all the more so in this case as the seigneur is a really fine gentleman. The Count d'Osmond,—who still lives, thank heaven,—was the first to suggest the foundation of this artistic club, and he also fathered the three institutions which are its life and being, the Committees of Literature, Art and Music.

The Count d'Osmond is a member of one of the most purely aristocratic families of the Faubourg Saint-Germain. His father was Ambassador in London at the time of the restoration of the French monarchy;

his sister is the Duchess de Maillé. He was the very man to sweep the doubting or timid spirits of the fashionable world into his orbit. Besides this he was fired with the idea. He was devoted to music, and had visions of a society of men who would themselves make music, and who would invite theatrical managers anxious to unearth fresh talent. This was the first concept of the club; another soon grafted itself on to it. The Salon was then becoming a mere market for canvases. Would it not be a happy thought to open a smaller gallery which visitors could see without fatigue in about an hour, and whither he, d'Osmond, would undertake to bring the world of fashion—the World, in short, which buys pictures?

He had, in fact, already set the example on a small scale. In his handsome house at Neuilly, he had long been wont to give parties where Art and Fashion met. All the guests found the fusion pleasant, and it might be said that the Cercle de l'Union Artistique was but the outcome, on a larger scale, of these evenings at d'Osmond's house.

The thing which most puzzles serious men is that such a practical undertaking should have been begun and successfully carried out by the most unpractical man in daily life who ever lived. The Count d'Osmond is in fact "a character," an original, whose genial freaks are past all counting. Who has not heard of his routs, his fancy-dress fêtes, all noted for some memorable feature; for instance, the famous crowning of the *Rosière*, which took place at his house in the midst of a large masked ball, and at which M. Dupuis, of the Variétés, figured disguised as the mayor.

This astounding man has thrown such fevered energy into his most trifling actions, that he has worn out many ordinary lives. Rest has always been his most detested foe, and yet locomotion does not strike him as being as practical as the founding of a club! He has indeed such a horror of railway travelling that he drives in his carriage, every year, all the way from Paris to his hunting estates in Austria!

And with all this the man who embraces so many things has but one arm. He lost it by an accident out hunting, while still a lad. At the same time this did not interfere with his doing his duty—nay, being a cripple, much more than his duty—both during the late war and after it. At the time of the Commune he faced a life of danger by the side of

his friend Galliffet, at that time colonel of light horse (*chasseurs à cheval*). Indeed after order had triumphed once more, M. de Galliffet said to him with droll solemnity : " Now, my good fellow, go back to the domestic hearth; and if you want a testimonial from me to secure your election as deputy I will give you one unhesitatingly."

" Then," said this most light-hearted of cripples, " add that I lost an arm as a *chasseur*. No one need inquire whether it was a *chasseur à cheval*."

This " brachial void," as M. d'Osmond himself calls it, reminds me of an incident of which the club was the scene. It was in June, 1877. A piece was to be played that evening in the little club theatre, and the Prince of Wales had promised to be present.

General de Gramont, the president of the club, who had had an arm carried away at Sedan by a cannon ball, was standing in the doorway, awaiting his Royal guest. M. d'Osmond was at his side, as past president. The Prince arrived, and got out of his carriage. It was rather dark, and putting out his hand, in the dim light, he grasped the General's empty sleeve; perceiving his mistake, he turned a little to the left, and, in his haste to shake hands to better purpose he caught hold of Count d'Osmond's stump. For a few seconds the Prince might have fancied that the Cercle de l'Union Artistique was a superior branch establishment of the Court of Miracles.

From the very first Count d'Osmond's happy star brought him valuable supporters for the success of his undertaking. A genial Portuguese—" The Portuguese are always gay," was at a later day a popular refrain—M. de Sampayo, at once became his ally, helping him to form the basis of its organisation. Next came the Marquis de Vogué, afterwards Ambassador at Vienna, and now President of the club; Prince Poniatowski, the composer of *Pierre de Medicis*; M. Cabrol, a delightful poet, and M. Mario Uchard, the admired writer of *La Fiammina*. From the outset all these gentlemen were agreed—even the musicians, wonder of wonders! even the writers, most prodigious wonder!—that the enterprise would die still-born unless they gave a prominent place to painters and sculptors. The notion was greeted with enthusiasm, and to endue it at once with body, an address was forwarded to every man of mark among

those who wielded the brush, or modelled clay. This manifesto, containing an outline of the proposed rules and by-laws, had the greatest success. Within a short time, the list of supporters included the names of Messieurs Baudry, Bida, Boulanger, Cabanel, E. Dubufe, E. Fromentin, Gérôme, Gudin, Isabey, Lambert, Eugène Lami, Meissonier, Palizzi, Perignon, Protais (the present vice-président) Philippe Rousseau, Troyon, and many well-known names besides.

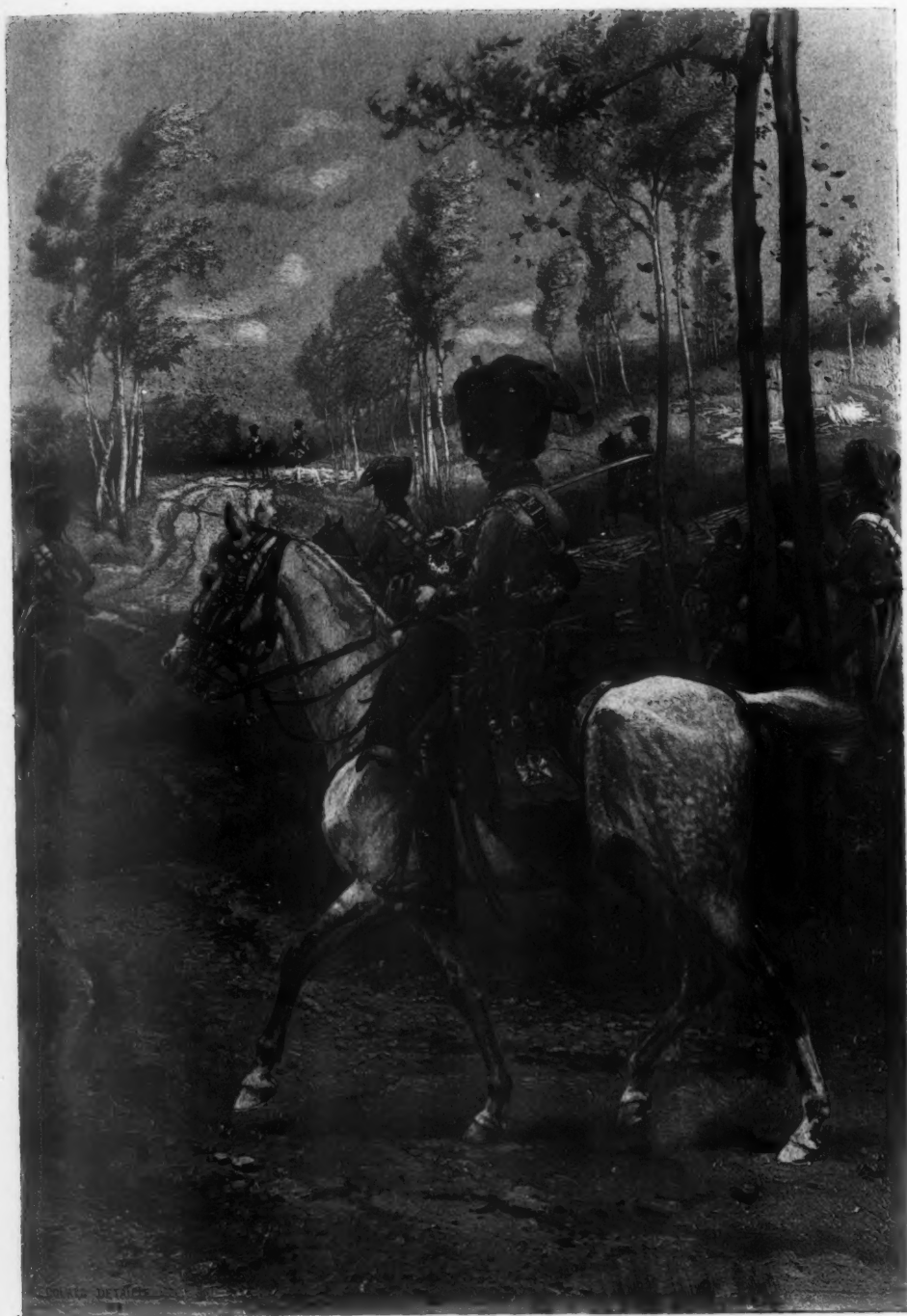
From that moment the club was existent. At the same time the support was gained of such men of letters as Émile Augier, Théophile Gautier, Aubryet, Camille Doucet, Octave Feuillet, Mérimée, Victor Roqueplan. Finally they tried, and not in vain, to enlist the aid of musicians; they were joined by Auber, Gounod, Halévy, Membrée, Liszt. It is worth noting that, in 1861, the first year of the club's active existence, Auber was president of the Committee of Music while one of its members was Richard Wagner. And this throws light on Princess Metternich's vehemence in defending the Opera of *Tannhäuser*, since her husband was Wagner's colleague and friend on the committee.

At that time the Committee of Painting was constituted as follows :

President, Count Melchior de Vogué. Vice-president, M. du Sommerard. Members, Messieurs Maurice Cottier, Davioud, Paul Demidoff, Eugène Fromentin, Théophile Gautier, Jauvin d'Attainville, Jouffroy, Eugène Lami, Penguilly, L'Haridon, Vicomte du Manoir, Troyon. How many of these names, alas! have been wiped out by death from the list of members; and it is strange on the other hand, to remember that the eldest, or almost the eldest who sat on that council in 1860, M. Eugène Lami, then 58 years of age, is to this day a member, and an active member of the Committee of Painting, in 1888.

With this single exception indeed it is altogether changed. This is the roll for this year : President, M. Meissonier. Vice-presidents, M. Cabanel, M. Gérôme. Members, Messieurs Béraud, Bonnat, Gustave Boulanger, Cormon, Delaunay, Franceschi, Humbert, Gruyer, Lefebvre, Mercié, Saint-Marceaux, Thirion.

It will be observed that the present list includes none but "professionals," as the phrase goes, while, according to the original spirit of the





club, amateurs and artists in the stricter sense were to amalgamate, witness the names of Prince Paul Demidoff and the Viscount du Manoir. It would seem that the lax attendance of the amateurs at the meetings of the committee led to their gradual elimination, effected, as beseems a club, with perfect courtesy, but with firm determination.

On the other hand there is another of the club laws which has fallen into desuetude, as it seems to us without sufficient reason. It is the rule by which a certain sum was set aside every year for the purchase of pictures to decorate the rooms of the club. The choice of these purchases was to rest with the Committee of Painting, who were, of course, to exclude their own works and limit their selection to pictures by young artists of promise. It is a great pity for the club that this rule should have been allowed to remain a dead letter. Only think of the value of the pictures it might by this time possess if successive committees for the last twenty years, say, had foreseen the distinction of the painters who now compose the council. We may, however, add, in defence of the club in its earlier days, that it had very small sums at its command, a mere balance on paper, to lay out on the acquisition of works of art.

The first expenses of its establishment were formidable. Prince de Polignac and M. Cabrol, being deputed to find it a home, had secured a splendid but costly mansion which had formerly been in the hands of the famous firm of Delille, and the expenses of furnishing swallowed a large portion of the subscriptions. So much so that the "Mirlitons" seemed on the eve of piping a dismal tune—their own funeral march. They racked their brains to find money by hook or by crook, and at the same time to reduce their expenses. To this end the painter Gendron, a very dry and amusing wag, proposed one evening that the garden of the club house should be laid out as a pretty little grave-yard, a resting-place where the members who might die in the course of the year would lie in peace. This suggestion having been negatived—as may be supposed—a more practical one was adopted. M. Maurice Cottier, since dead as vice-president, who made munificent use of a fine fortune, offered a loan of 40,000 francs (£ 1,600). This was accepted and the transaction completed; then other members subscribed to the loan, to the sum of

100,000 francs (£ 4,000). Thus the preliminary outlay was met. Meanwhile new members came trooping in, baccarat,—horrible baccarat—brought in goodly sums—it was at the time when M. Wilson, holding the bank against all comers, reduced himself to the position of a ward in the hands of trustees,—and the club was saved.

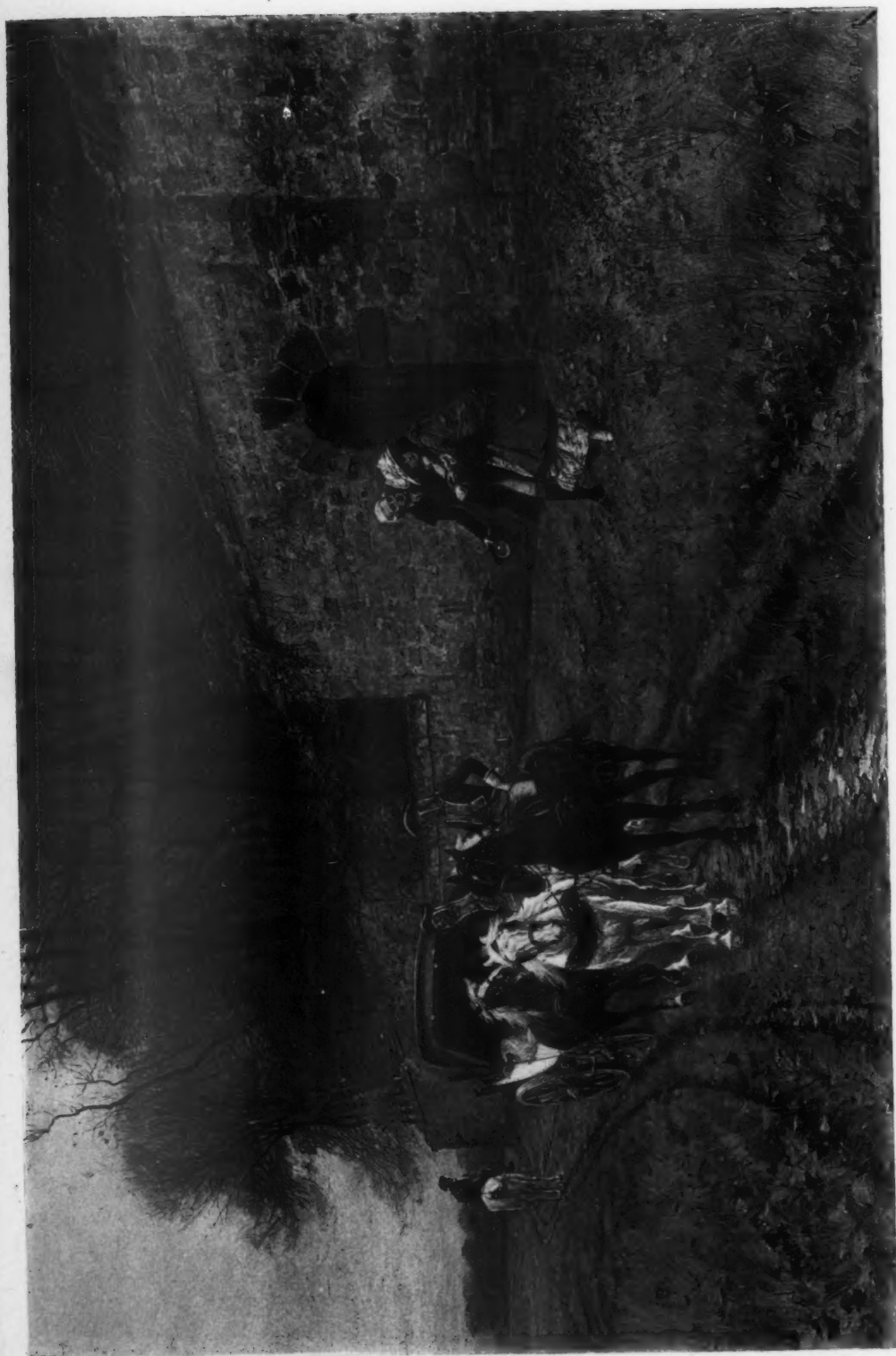
Never was there a more jovial resurrection. The early years of the club in the Rue de Choiseul have left an indescribable mark on the minds of its contemporaries. The traditional geniality of painters soon infected those of their colleagues on the committee who were at that time known as the *Gandins*.

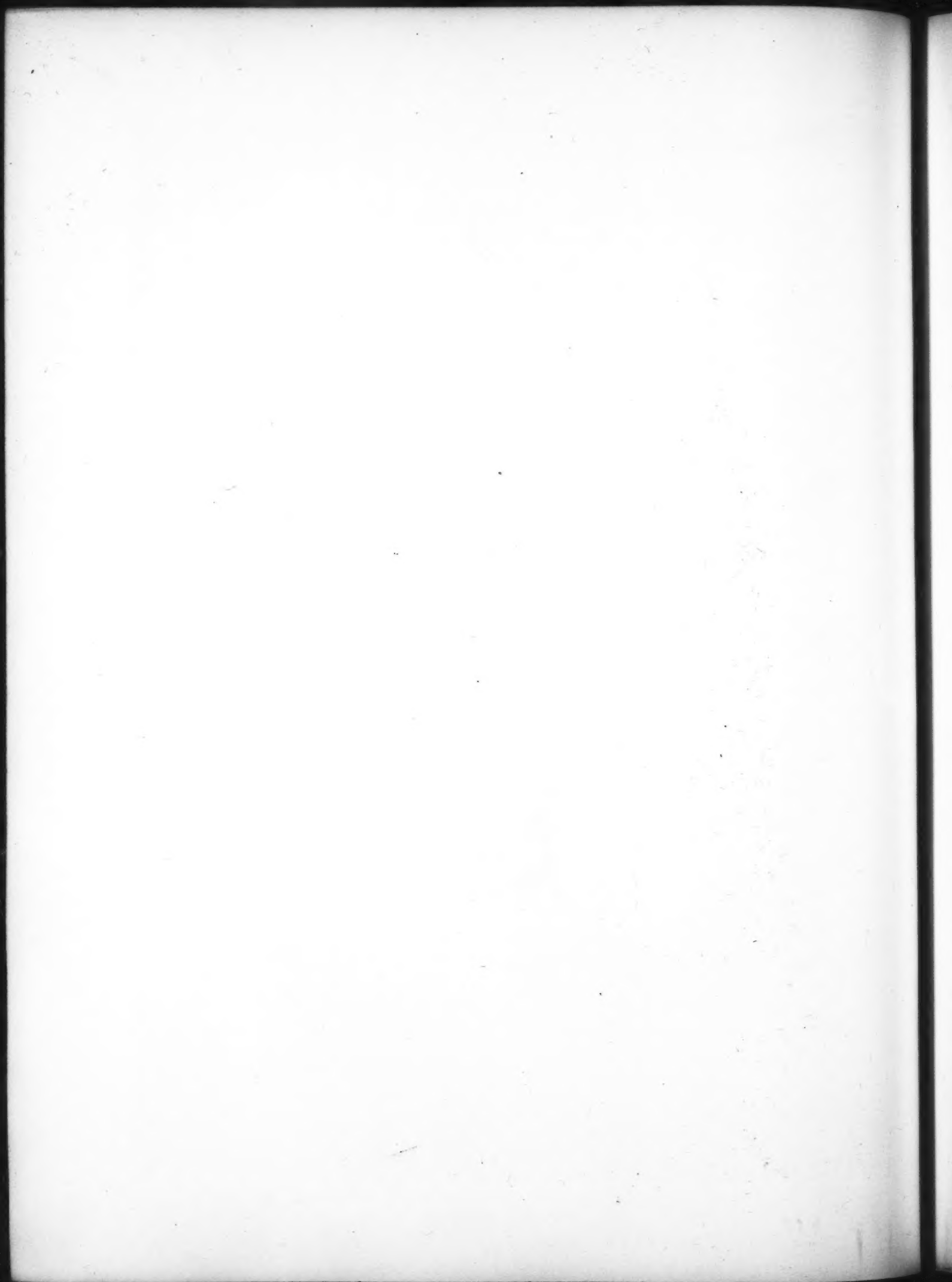
They all met at dinner, and for a chat over their coffee and liqueurs when dinner was ended; and did not break up till the servant came in to say :

“Gentlemen, the bank is opened for 100 louis.”

Then, while the men of fashion went to the game—the bank being held by M. Wilson, or the Duke de Grammont-Caderousse, or the Marquis de Miramon, not to mention fifty others who at this day are highly respected station-masters in France, or melancholy ranchmen in the remotest pampas of America—the thriftier artists, as men to whom the loss of their stakes represents a wasted output of brain work, would sit down to their little game of *trente-et-un*. This modest game was never dull, especially when those two “jolly good fellows” Jadin and Rousseau, friends so intimate that their chief delight was to plague each other, were left playing, the others having been driven out of the field.

The way they abused each other in fun, the tricks they tried to play each other in this duel at cards, was a thing no words can do justice to, but it was the delight of the whole gallery. Rousseau without Jadin, or Jadin without Rousseau, was the body without the soul. Neither could do without the other to egg him on; but their ingenious dodges to avoid being caught were a treat to see. One evening Rousseau was sitting with his nose close down to his three cards, and a twinkle in his eye as he plotted a stroke to ruin his adversary at *trente-et-un*. Jadin came into the room, saw him, stole up on tip-toe behind him, and began to blow very softly on the nape of his neck. The other players took no notice and choked down their laughter. Rousseau scenting the foe, sat





perfectly still; only lifting his nose a little way from his hand and fixing his eye on one of the servants, he said in his mildest tones : "Just shut the door behind me. A fearful smell of stale fish comes up from the kitchen." And the laugh was not on Jadin's side that evening.

These very men, and the rest of their genial brotherhood, could be serious enough when they had to regulate the arrangements and smallest details of the exhibitions.

These were a great social event. M. d'Osmond's first conception of the thing having met with public approval, the club wished to make a good show and a great show; and above all to display to their visitors none but works of exceptional merit. In obedience to this wish the Committee of painting one day issued an invitation to several artists who did not belong to the club to exhibit. M. de Nieuwerkerke, at that time an influential member, and president of the Committee, was also Superintendent of the School of Fine Art (*École des Beaux-Arts*), and so able to secure some valuable supporters. Thus it was that the gallery in the Rue de Choiseul became the receptacle of hundreds of magnificent works, of which we need only mention François Millet's "Angelus," and Théodore Rousseau's "Avenue of chestnut-trees."

At the same time smaller and individual exhibitions were organised. One or another painter sent a complete collection of his works. This was announced without much formality by an invitation to the members of the club; a few tickets were sent to well-known amateurs, and the artists who exhibited, frequently found among them intelligent and munificent patrons, and blessed an association which it was flattering, pleasant, and remunerative to be invited to join.

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These excellent traditions have not died out: when it moved from the Rue de Choiseul to the Place Vendôme the club did not renounce its allegiance to Art. It was a heart-breaking event when a painter of distinction retired, and an occasion of rejoicing when the name of one whose fame was rising was entered on the lists.

We do not intend to attempt a recapitulation in detail of the cata-

logue of the various successive exhibitions at the Place Vendôme. Each in its turn was remarkable for the appearance of at least two of three works which became the talk of Paris, and defied criticism. The only fault I have ever heard found with these exhibitions was that they were inundated with such a quantity of amateur work. But what is to be done? It is exceedingly difficult to draw the imaginary line which separates the amateur from the artist. Is the amateur—as he has been severely defined—an artist without talent, or is he not? Let others decide the delicate question, not I. What is perfectly clear is that every member of the club has the right to exhibit, and that it would be hard to carp at the right. Let all the pictures be hung! On the line or above the line. Art knows her own children.

The year 1881 was a date to be inscribed in white chalk, in the club annals.

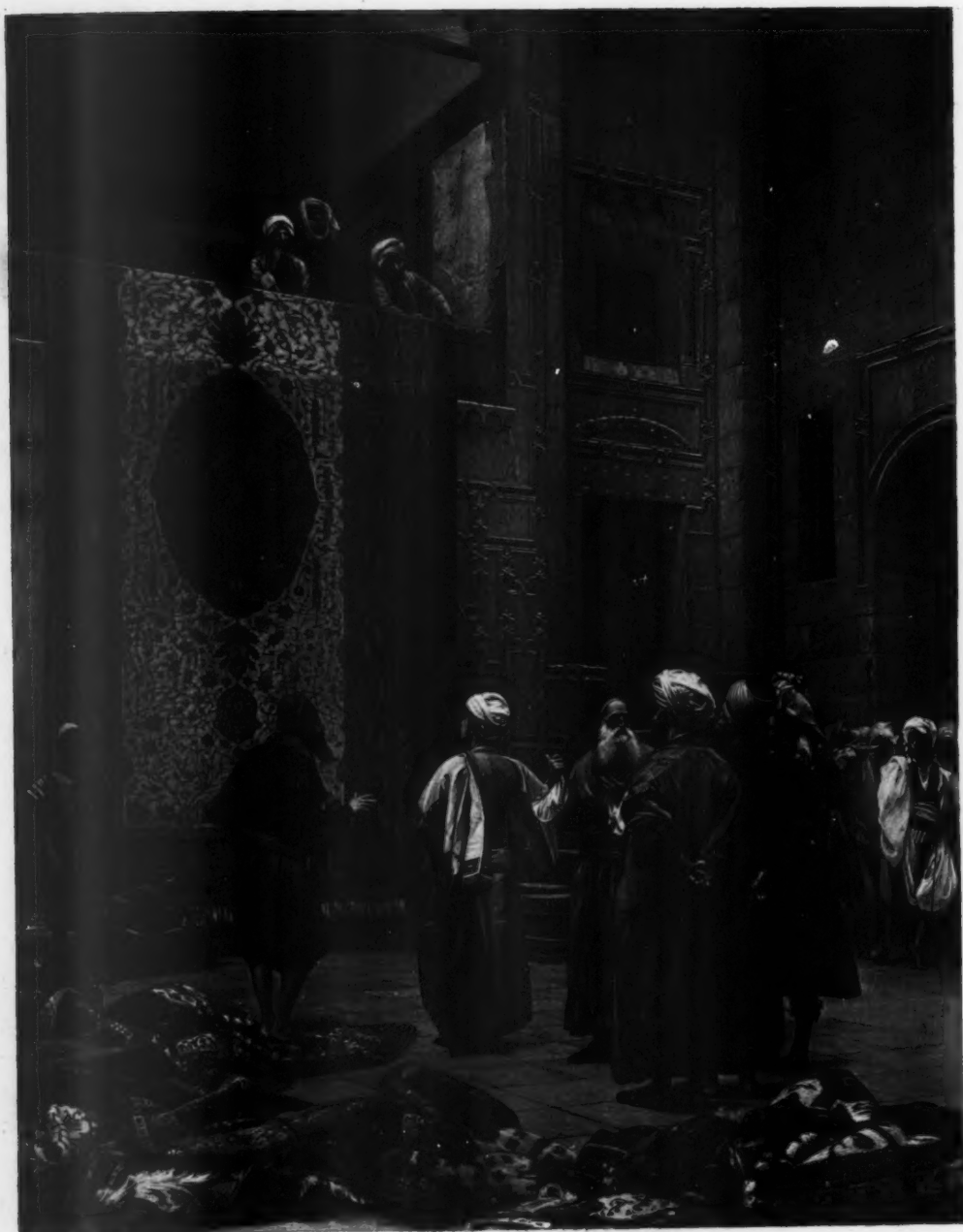
Medals of honour were awarded to two of its members, M. Carolus-Duran and M. de Saint-Marceaux, one as painter and the other as sculptor. Besides this, another member, M. Maignan, obtained, without a rival, a first-class medal for painting. This threefold victory was celebrated by a grand banquet, at which above three hundred of the successful artists' brethren were present. Their health was drunk with toasts in prose and in verse, and champagne—Saint-Marceaux—flowed in rivers.

Since then there have been some very curious and interesting minor exhibitions, besides the great annual displays; one of drawings by Bida; the fine decorations designed for M. Bartholoni, a member of the club, by poor Palizzi, lately dead; the works of de Nittis—among them the "Races at Longchamps" a work of startling power; and the huge canvases of Gustave Doré and Gustave Boulanger.

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A question here arises which many still ask, and which artists even occasionally discuss among themselves: do the disadvantages of belonging to a club of which the greater number of members are "laymen" outweigh the advantages?

To me the problem seems to be solved. The idea started by Count





d'Osmond and his friends has been a fruitful one. If the *Cercle de l'Union Artistique* did not exist, it would have now to be invented.

What danger, in fact, is there for any artist in belonging to a club? Are we afraid of his wasting his time there? This betrays ignorance of the man. Look round the rooms of the Mirlitons' as long as it is daylight in the studio; you will find neither painter nor sculptor here. These gentlemen have something better to do than to handle a billiard cue or lounge in an arm-chair and stare at the pretty women who cross the Place Vendôme. At most do they look in for a few minutes between five and six. The greater number are never to be seen here till after dinner. With the exception of M. Protais, the worthy vice-president, and Messieurs Detaille, Saintin, and de Saint-Marceaux who, as members of the Committee are obliged to attend more frequently, there is not a single habitué of the club who is an artist.

The artists among themselves, derive one great benefit from the club; they learn to know—and consequently to esteem—each other. In general the life of a painter or a sculptor is almost that of a recluse. How many could I mention who, living all in one house containing perhaps ten studios, never think of calling on a brother artist. They have not time, or perhaps are afraid of intruding on another man's inspiration, and of being interrupted in their turn in the midst of their work. The result is that many of them live shut up in themselves. As a singular instance of such isolation, I lately read an anecdote of a celebrated Austrian sculptor, living at Vienna in the early years of the century. This man had been so wholly absorbed by his art that, several years after Waterloo, he said to an acquaintance:

"It was at the time of the great General, you know, who won so many battles—Tell me his name, I have quite forgotten it."

The name was—Napoleon.

Væ soli! The words of Scripture apply to the artist. Some, understanding this, are to be met with in cafés; but so few that there is little to attract them to officiate at these shrines of "le bock." The club is better. And the result that has been gained is that the incessant flood of running down, which was the small change of talk in every

studio, is now regarded as stale sport. This comes in great measure from the daily friction which has rubbed down many angles and soothed the itching of much aggravated self-esteem. Be very sure that an artist's private opinion of a brother artist is based on the other's merits, and that he does not feel bound to cry up a gentleman's talent simply because both their names figure in the same list; still, they are introduced, they exchange a few words when opportunity offers, and that is enough to check the utterance of the pleasantries of a past date. A man is shy of saying of another whose hand he has just shaken that "his handling is detestable."

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I spoke just now of the dealings between buyers and artists over the acquisition of a work, but in these days of crash and crisis the buyers' name is not Legion, and for this reason I take the liberty of calling the attention of the club to one of their by-laws which was intended to facilitate the sale of the works exhibited, and which relates, in point of fact, to the organisation of a lottery to promote that end.

Do not protest. The complaints commonly brought against the immorality of lotteries have nothing to do with this one. The risks of betting on races are protected by law; it would be a pretty state of things if less were done for artists than for horses! A lottery got up after each exhibition seems to me an excellent idea, especially now, when in a club of more than two thousand members, there could be no difficulty in disposing of the tickets. What man accustomed to toss a stake of twenty francs on the green cloth would hesitate to risk the same sum on a ticket giving him the chance of beginning a gallery of pictures? It strikes me that the lottery of the *Cercle de l'Union Artistique* would, from the very first, be quite as successful as the Spanish lottery which just now is the rage at the club, some enthusiasts subscribing together to take tickets of 500 or 1,000 pesetas. It would be a fresh amusement, a new diversion. A man of the world would watch for a chance of winning a Meissonier as eagerly as a *conciierge* hoped for five winning numbers in a lottery at the time of the Restoration.

This is what I said to myself as I stood, at the beginning of February

last, in the Salle Petit, watching the unpacking of the works sent for the club exhibition. I pictured myself the possessor of a dozen, or a score of tickets—one may treat one's self handsomely in one's dreams—and as the canvases were marched past me to take their stand in a row against the wall, I fancied myself on the day when the lottery should be drawn, laying my hand on some gem of art amid the applause of the excited and envious bystanders. On what prize could I think my twenty francs thrown away—the first prize, the second prize, a quite tiny prize even, the work of some amateur encouraged by a too fondly uncritical family?

My covetousness was damped, or qualified however, by considerations of kind. I admire portrait painting, for instance, and value it highly; but there is something personal about it which moderates my desire to possess. Look at the fine portraits of Mademoiselle Saléta-Ricard, by M. Jules Lefebvre; of M. Himly, *doyen* of the Faculty of Letters, by M. Wencker; of General Garnier, by M. Jalabert; of the Baroness Gustave de Rothschild, by M. Chartran; of Madame Ephrussi, by M. Stewart; with the splendid contributions sent by MM. Cabanel, Émile Lévy, Ferrier, Sain, Schommer, Machard, and Humbert, and the magnificent portrait of Alphonse Karr by Carolus-Duran. To whom do these belong? To the sitter or his wife, his daughter, his father, his brother— Vain to think of those. They remain in the family; they are sacred.

But, apart from portraits, what temptations to take lottery tickets! I can see, at this moment, the very panel in my writing-room where I would hang that *Britanny Girl*, by M. Dagnan-Bouveret, or those *Huntsmen*, by M. Goubie; or again that *Love with a Butterfly*, by M. Bouguereau. There is still a tiny space to fill at one end of the wall. Shall I have that sweet inspiration of M. Lemalle's *The Mother of God*, those scenes of rustic life so picturesquely felt by M. Victor Gilbert, that *Freebooter*, by M. Berne-Bellecour; or *The Eve of Departure*, by M. Clairin? Nay. The East attracts me. There, there would I die, as Béranger said of Greece. Clear that corner of the drawing-room at once, remove those useless mirrors to make way for this pair, *Fantasia*, and *Moonrise in Tangier*, by M. Benjamin Constant—*Night on the Terrace at Algiers*, by

M. Bridgman; that *View of La Goulette (Tunis)*, by M. Cormon, and the *Slave Market in Morocco*, by M. Ziem, the Venetian who has been so splendidly unfaithful to his marriage with the Adriatic. And as a contrast to these sunlit marvels I should hang just opposite to them, this dazzling *Effect of Snow*, by M. Huet, and that poetical landscape called *Winter*, by M. Pierre Lagarde.

All that out of one lottery ticket!—Dear me, yes; and as I have begun Perrette's day-dream I will go on with it to the end. Before my milk-jug breaks we will draw the lucky numbers which shall make me owner of Meissonier's *Pasquale*, of M. Rochegrosse's *Idleness*; and of *Fortunio*, by M. Courtois. Nor should I feel I had lost a day if I found myself the owner of *A lost Day*, by M. Théophile Gide.

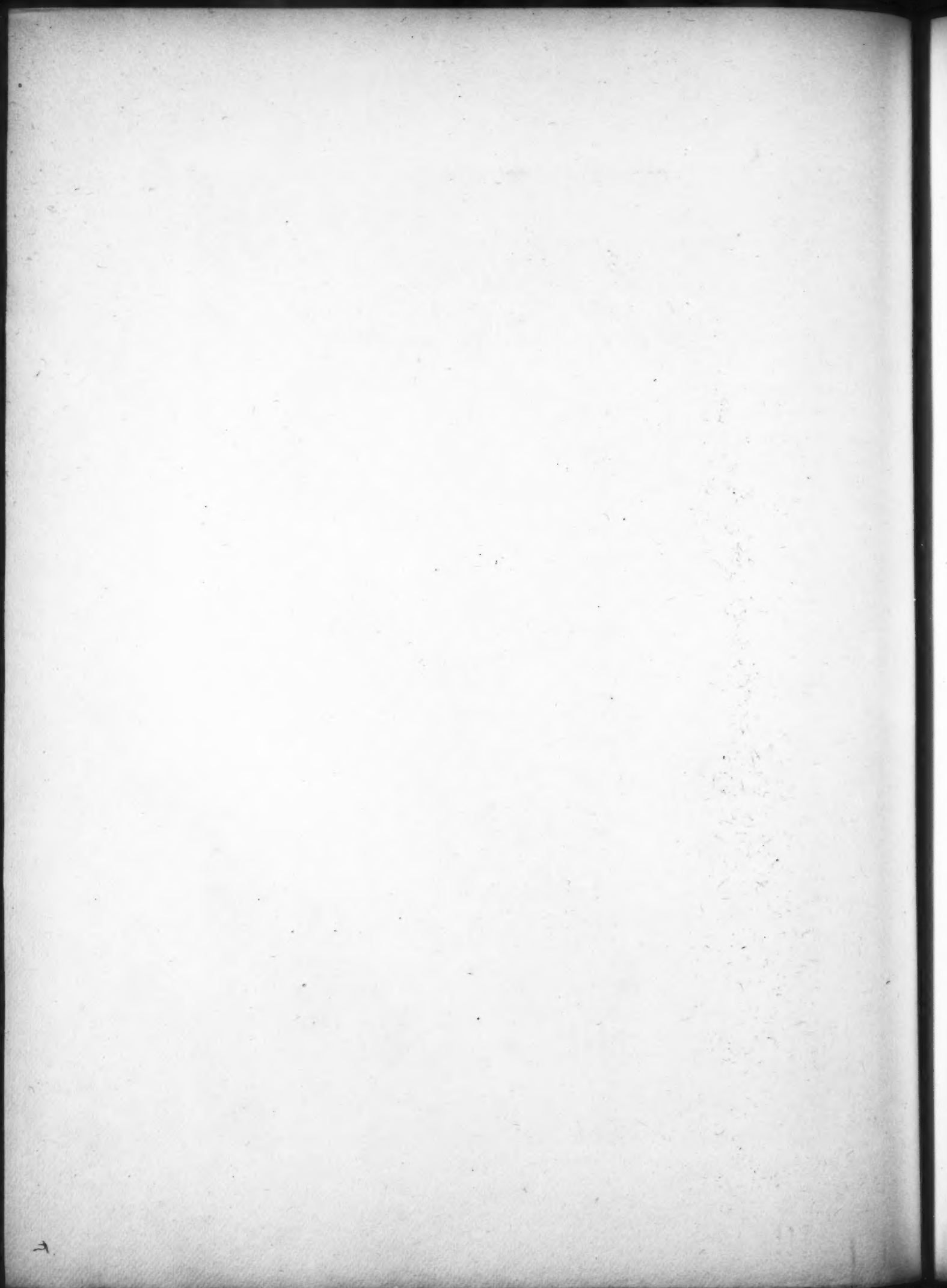
At the same time let us set up pedestals in a conspicuous place, to receive the *Arab Girl* and the *School-boy*, two wonderful terra-cotta figures by M. de Saint-Marceaux, together with the admirable sculpture signed d'Epinay, Franceschi, and the fine bust in oxydised silver, representing the Empress of Russia, by M. Gautherin.

And then, and then—my day-dreams of becoming a Mæcenas at twenty francs a ticket become more exact and take a more definite shape. My ambitious aims grow more eclectic, and finally my choice is limited to five works at which I gaze and gaze, and cannot tear myself away: five pearls of this Mirlitons' exhibition; five first prizes, which I fully expect to win—all five, or you will see!

For instance that *Gravelotte*, in which M. Aimé Morot shows us a French cuirassier fighting tooth and nail with a Prussian Cuirassier—a splendid tangle of two men and two horses, rushing at each other across the plain—a terrific struggle: the Frenchman bare-headed, his eyes starting, his teeth set, trying to dismount his enemy.

Following the glorious vanquished of yesterday, here we have the happy conqueror of bygone times. Squarely seated in his saddle, the bridle in one hand, and in the other his sword, the *Hussar of 1806* rides forward through a glade, his pale clear-cut profile looking to the left. 1806 is Jena, Auerstaedt, Magdeburg capitulating to a handful of Hussars such as he. The picture is worthy of the glorious reminiscences





it calls up. The great qualities which characterise the painter, M. Detaille, —sobriety, precision, and simple dignity,—have never been more brilliantly displayed. The *Hussar of 1806* wins for him his battle of Jena on the walls of the Salle de la Rue de Sèze.

The *Carpet Merchant at Cairo*, exhibited by M. Gérôme is painted by the hand of a master, or as Labruyère said of some fine literary work, the hand of a workman. Admirable drawing, infinite skill in composition, and masterly colouring have, in this painter's hands, reached a pitch of perfection which is rightly called distracting, for it gives the worthy minor brethren bad dreams. A perfect nightmare, indeed, this time I promise them, for M. Gérôme has, if possible, outdone himself. The faces of the merchants, the oriental gravity of the purchasers, the enormous carpet offered to their acquisition, all are exquisitely choice "bits," executed by a hand which will not know failure this many a day, for it is guided by one of the most original and powerful artist-minds of this closing century.

M. Delort transports us at once back to the days of Louis XV. Nothing more graceful and crisp can be imagined than this *Elopement*. The post-chaise is waiting at the park-gates, and two postillions, sitting their horses boldly, are waiting for orders. An elderly servant is seen issuing from a low side-gate, hat in hand, very humbly; while on his other arm leans a love of a little lady, wearing a love of a hat—tremulous, agitated, looking away that she may not see the post-chaise which will presently bear her off as fast as four horses can gallop. Further away a man on horseback looks round to make sure that the scheme has succeeded. A lucky dog—as they would have said in those days—a lucky dog, is the dashing young gallant or attractive dandy who is about to carry off his bewitching conquest to some snug little retreat inaccessible to the King's Officers and the husband's very justifiable resentment.

M. Doucet, undoubtedly the master-painter of fashionable elegance, exhibits a *Five-o'clock tea* which is positively delightful. He shows us a drawing-room furnished in the latest fashion, full of pictures by great masters, of china vases, and of old tapestry; in this he has placed half a dozen or so of young women, one seated at the piano, one see-sawing

in a rocking-chair, the rest taking tea. Over all this pretty scene there hovers a delicious flavour of flirtation. An old dandy respectfully kisses the hand of the lady in the rocking-chair, and as if in contrast, a very young man, his legs shyly clinging to each other, as it were, is listening to the secrets poured into his ear by a pretty laughing brunette, her finger on her lips. To the left, by the piano, another youth, even less at his ease, is conscientiously turning over the leaves of a piece of music, when he need only stand a step further back to look down on the graceful head and throat of the player. But, dear me, everything in this *Five-o'clock tea* is strictly proper. We almost expect to see "L'abbé Constantin" walk in.

And now which is to be the prize? I will not decide; but the least perfect of these works would alone justify the reopening of the Club lottery; not to mention that the man who should win the bewitching illustration by M. Stewart which serves as our frontispiece would not have drawn an unlucky number. It shows once more the delicate grace and elegance of this American painter who has so quickly become a Parisian, and thus added to the pleasures of two nations.

GASTON JOLLIVET.





THE CONFESSION

CHARACTERS

General Count de ROCA, aged 45. | Countess MARTHE DE ROCA, aged 29.
 ROBERT, his nephew (a doctor), aged 28 | A SISTER OF MERCY.
 LISBETH, an elderly maid-servant.

Time : present. Scene : Count de Roca's mansion, Paris.

A lady's bed-room, large and very richly furnished. A big bed with a Henry II canopy; a high chimney-piece; a fire burning in the grate. Roomy modern easy-chairs in long-piled plush; a wide window of small leaded panes. A Henry II "Prie-Dieu" chair and stool: on the chimney-piece a lamp turned down, with a large screen of cream-coloured lace. On the rise of the curtain the Count de Roca is lying in an arm-chair, three-quarters turned towards the audience, with his feet resting on the stool; he is asleep. The Count is in cavalry general's full uniform. The left-hand door opens. The Countess appears in a white dressing-gown, makes for the back of the stage, raises the door-curtain and fastens it back. Beyond can be seen a chamber illuminated by a night lamp, giving a pink light. A child's cradle with the curtains drawn, a sister-of-mercy and an elderly woman-servant watching by each side of the cradle. Both rise on seeing the Countess.

SCENE I.

THE COUNT *asleep*, THE SISTER-OF-MERCY, MARTHE, LISBETH

MARTHE, *in a low tone, to the Sister*. Well, Sister? Remain seated, I beg.

THE SISTER. Six long hours' sleep.

MARTHE. Six hours and no restlessness? no fever?

THE SISTER. The child was somewhat restless about three in the morning. The Count would not have Madame disturbed, but he sent for Doctor Robert who gave the child a soothing draught. Lisbeth rocked him in her arms, whereupon he dropped off to sleep and has not woken since.

MARTHE, *pushing back the cradle curtains*. Yes, he is still asleep. What is the time? Ten minutes past nine; yes, that makes six hours' good sleep. Poor dear little baby, it is the first time he has slept like this for three weeks. Alas, will this improvement continue?

THE SISTER. I have every ground for hoping it will, Madame. Doctor Robert said yesterday that he did not believe a relapse possible.

MARTHE. Ah! Sister, how glad I am!

THE SISTER. So am I, Madame, glad indeed.

MARTHE, *beckoning to Lisbeth*. Lisbeth!

LISBETH. Madame!

MARTHE. Has my husband been sitting up in the arm-chair I see placed here?

LISBETH. The Count threw himself on the bed yesterday evening, after Madame had left, then roused by the Sister at three o'clock on account of Master Jean having an attack of fever, he remained sitting up along with his nephew Doctor Robert. At seven the Count went to put on his uniform and told me he was going to Head Quarters. I was to tell Madame so if she came back before his return.

MARTHE. Ah, yes, it is the burial of general Moirel at eleven to-day.

LISBETH. The Count has been back more than an hour. Does Madame feel better?

MARTHE. Yes, Lisbeth, I have had a thorough rest. I shall be able to take my turn of sitting up again, this evening.

LISBETH. Oh! not so soon as this evening; Madame will be sure to fall ill, herself.

MARTHE. No, my good Lisbeth, I shall not fall ill. Thank you; and now go and take a little rest yourself.

LISBETH. There is nothing Madame wants?

MARTHE. Tell Rose to wait for me in my room.

SCENE II.

THE COUNT *asleep*, MARTHE

MARTHE, *in a low tone*. Good Heavens! how wretched I am! Pierre, my husband, my beloved, if you but knew what I am suffering.

THE COUNT, *waking with a start*. Ah! pardon me, my dear Marthe, I was sleeping heavily and was dreaming of you, by Jove!— Such a horrid dream— Brrr, brrr, why, you are crying— Has—

MARTHE, *stopping him*. Reassure yourself, Jeanot is better.

THE COUNT. Then why are you crying? (*drawing her towards him*.) Come, come, my dear child, be of good heart, the real danger has gone by, there is no more risk, and you are crying! Ah! It has been a sharp trial, I know. Lose our child! our son! so ardently desired, so long waited for! It would have been a Nemesis upon me for my too great happiness, but we have done nothing to deserve such a blow— God is too just to inflict it upon us.

MARTHE, *gloomily*. Yes— God is just— and I am afraid!

THE COUNT. Well, I am not afraid any longer, not afraid a bit.

MARTHE. Oh! Jean is still very ill!

THE COUNT. True! But to-night I was by the side of the cradle, and my worthy nephew Robert was standing, holding poor baby's hand, all trembling with fever, in his. Little by little, the child fell off to sleep, Robert never budged, and I stared at him in surprise. His gaze was fixed on my son with such a sad intensity, that he seemed unable to withdraw it. I saw a tear in his eye. When I questioned him, "Pardon me, uncle," he said, "my nerves are unstrung after this horrible

struggle with death. Now we have got the upper hand, I am overdone, and inclined to cry like a woman. Anyhow, he is safe at last! There was a moment when I was afraid; I can tell you so, now that it is over, and there is nothing more to fear, absolutely nothing more." Ah! noble fellow, what devotedness! For three weeks he has never left our poor little baby's pillow. And to think that you were unwilling for him to be called in for our son—— and to think that I had to be positively angry with you—— or almost angry—— Which of us was in the right—— naughty mother?

MARTHE. I was.

THE COUNT. Ah! you are unjust, you are ungrateful, Marthe. This is more than antipathy, it is aversion.

MARTHE, *embarrassed*. Be it so.

THE COUNT. I consider the feeling unworthy of you, my dear child, and the motive for your aversion, let me tell you, is beneath your intelligence.

MARTHE, *surprised*. The motive?

THE COUNT. Your mother told me of the quarrels between you about religion. Yes—— yes, I know, Robert is an atheist, a hardened atheist, and her ladyship my wife is of a devout turn of mind.

MARTHE. Well, then, since you know—— torment me no more on this subject, I entreat. The fact is, your nephew believes in nothing, respects nothing; he openly displays an incredulity that is revolting to me, and the theories he maintains lead sooner or later to the perpetration of some act of baseness.

THE COUNT. There you have a woman all over! An exaggeration, before you know where you are! Why not say, the perpetration of a crime, while you are about it?

MARTHE. Oh, as for that!—— who—— what—— would restrain him?

THE COUNT. His conscience.

MARTHE. Conscience not being amenable either to the scalpel or to the microscope, your nephew is bound to be ignorant of its existence.

THE COUNT. My nephew, my dear Marthe, was brought up by myself; I assure you I taught him what honour and conscience are.

MARTHE. Then I assure you he has forgotten it—— But see what things





you make me say—— I beg you, let us talk no more about him. It is not being kind to me.

THE COUNT. Very well, we will resume this subject by-and-by, but for the moment let it be taken as finished. I will say no more about it, and to smooth that pretty brow, I have a bit of news which will give you pleasure.

MARTHE. Ah! What is it?

THE COUNT. There is a letter from your mother telling me of her intended arrival to-morrow. She wants to know if she can bring Régina with her, without danger.

MARTHE, *delighted*. My daughter! And mamma! To-morrow! Oh! What happiness! Why, yes, tell her yes; Régina has nothing to fear now; at least I think not. Do you see any danger?

THE COUNT. No—— still I will go and consult—— the atheist, and, according as he answers yes or no, will send a telegram to your mother.

MARTHE. But why has mamma not written to me as well?

THE COUNT. Because—— Do you mean to say you cannot guess why your mother and your daughter are particularly bent on coming to-morrow?

MARTHE. No—— I can't guess.

THE COUNT. Why, to-morrow is your birthday.

MARTHE. Dear me! so it is.

THE COUNT. Our poor little one's illness had driven that happiest of all days clean out of my head. Can you pardon me?

MARTHE, *kissing him*. No—— and there is your punishment. Ah! To think that to-morrow I shall be twenty-nine years old.

THE COUNT. What an old woman, to be sure!——

MARTHE. You laugh! But it's true all the same—— don't you see that twenty-nine in a woman's case is the limit—— twenty-seven, twenty-eight, twenty-nine, and sixty—— just like piquet.

THE COUNT. So I, who am on "forty-five" years old, am an old fogey.

MARTHE. Oh! you! as a general you are quite a young man.

THE COUNT, *laughing*. But I am something besides a general!

MARTHE. Oh! as a husband you are of the golden age.

THE COUNT. So you still love me as much as ever, tell me, Marthe.

MARTHE. Oh! yes, I love you with all the strength of my heart.

THE COUNT. Bless you, my dear wife, for all the happiness I owe you. Do you know, I have been so happy for these ten years that when death was hovering near us, I had a sort of fear that it had come to make me pay up my arrears of grief. Perfect happiness is such a rare thing! Ah! There are not many people privileged to walk hand in hand towards the Unknown, and they, too, are rare who, like us, can embellish their love with esteem and confidence. But you are crying! Ah! What an imbecile I am, a regular old dreamer. I ought to be making you smile, instead of cry. My poor dear, think no more about the past, look forward to the future, think of your son running down the long avenues of our old château of Roche-Brune, down in Bretagne, think of him growing up, and fancy him becoming a handsome and gallant officer!

MARTHE. Oh! yes, I should like to go, and to go as soon as possible. For I ought to tell you: I have made a vow, sworn an oath—to God. I swore that, if my child was saved, I would go to Roche-Brune, and that I would stay there till my dying-day.

THE COUNT. The day you took that oath, my poor Marthe, you were all mother, you were not a wife, and you left me out of the account!

MARTHE. Oh! yes, I was a wife, as well, and I have not overlooked you. Listen. I have a great boon to beg, a great proof of your love to ask of you.

THE COUNT. And that is?— Ask away.

MARTHE. Swear you will say: yes.

THE COUNT, *laughing*. Not a bit of it!

MARTHE. For my birthday?

THE COUNT. Well then— yes, if I possibly can.

MARTHE. Oh! A "yes" like that binds you to nothing.

THE COUNT. At any rate, out with it!

MARTHE. I want—I want you to quit the service.

THE COUNT, *violently*. Never!

MARTHE, *pointing to the child's room*. Not so loud.

THE COUNT. True; pardon my roughness, but do you, Marthe, in your turn, listen to me. You have made a vow; it is an oath and, however

cruel it may seem to me, you shall keep it; but I have made a promise to myself, a promise that is as good as your oath. I have promised myself to serve my country with the whole strength of my life.

MARTHE. Ah! Pierre, let me explain to you.

THE COUNT. My dear child, it is hardly proper for me to enter upon a discussion with you as to the duties of a French soldier in the present and his responsibilities in the future; but know once for all that I will never throw up my commission! This is your second attempt of the kind. I put it down at first to some whim, but in view of the grave consequences of your oath, I begin to understand your persistence, and I foresee fresh attacks. Spare me them, my dear Marthe; they would be of no avail. You know me well enough to be aware that I make no compromises when my will is concerned. You shall keep your word, I will remain faithful to mine and I will do all I can not to be parted from you. Come now, I will go and see Robert, then send your mother the telegram; look at me—you understand—you pardon—you love me?

MARTHE, *passionately*. Ah! yes, I do love you!

(The Count imprints a long kiss on her hair, then goes out.)

SCENE III.

MARTHE, *alone*.

(She remains a long time silent, on her feet, looking at the door by which her husband has left.)

Yes, I love you—and I long to die. *(She bursts into tears and falls into a chair, overcome.)* Oh! God, have pity on me! Let me die. Sweep me away in the grief-fraught whirlwind of penitent souls. Do not let me writhe under the fearful weight of a crime whose horror stifles me, bears me down and leaves me without strength to confess it. Ah! miserable coward that I am, I can think of nothing, do nothing but weep and tell lies—for ever tell lies. Oh! for that I am strong enough, I hide my shame under a smile, I offer my brow, my sullied lips to my husband's kisses—And nothing in me, nothing, opens his eyes to my infamy. Where can I have learnt such things? Who has taught me these brazen smiles and lying kisses? Who

has gained such mastery over me as to abolish my sense of shame and whisper indulgent excuses to my heart?— Alas! alas! every hour that elapses leaves me a greater coward than before and makes me a guiltier thing. What! is my heart to be then eternally filled with terror and remorse— Oh! no, no! cowardice, let me go, let me go! I *will* speak. Let me rather bend my head under the humiliation of confession than under the shame of a lie; my God, give me strength to strike this honourable man in his dearest affections— But alas! if I speak, it will be his death, and I love him, I love him!

THE SISTER, *opening the door.* Madame! quick, quick! baby has fainted.

MARTHE, *starting up.* My son, my son! go, go for the Doctor— Help— His father— send for his father— Run, sister, run! (*falling on her knees.*) Ah! don't die, my little child, my darling, don't die— My God! how pale he is! Jean! my little Jeanot! open your eyes; it is I, mamma—; he is as cold as ice. So he is dying, and it is not true then that God is just— Why does *he* suffer! It is not he who should suffer, but I! Oh! my God, God who art so good, so just, let me keep him.

(*The Count enters, and stops, petrified, on the threshold.*)

Do not kill him, I will go— I will carry my child away, so far away, that the man I have betrayed and abandoned shall think us both dead— Yes, I have been making a thief, a traitor, a criminal of this innocent babe. Yes, he only usurps his place in this house, every kiss he gives my husband is an insult. I see it all. (*She beats her breast.*) It is my fault, my fault, my unpardonable fault! But I am his mother. I have a right to his life—

THE COUNT. (*He has locked the door, and advancing to Marthe as she is still on her knees, lays his hand on her shoulder.*) The father?

(*Marthe draws herself up as though moved by a spring and recoils with a terrible and prolonged cry.*)

THE COUNT. The man's name, I say?

MARTHE, *stupefied.* Yes— Yes, I understand— you want to know—

THE COUNT, *trembling with suppressed passion.* The name of the father of this child.

MARTHE, *gently.* His name— why his name?

THE COUNT. I must know it.

MARTHE, *still very gently*. I cannot utter it.

THE COUNT, *takes her by the wrists*. Woman! woman! So hardy for the crime, so bold in the lie and so craven face to face with the avowal! His name, I say?

MARTHE. I must not tell it. Have pity and kill me.

THE COUNT. None of your empty words! Answer my question. What is the man's name!

MARTHE. Two victims ought to satisfy your vengeance.

THE COUNT. So you are not without fear on his account.

MARTHE, *piteously*. Oh! not on his!

(The door is pushed, from outside.)

THE SISTER. Open the door, open the door, here is the Doctor!

MARTHE, *rushing to the door*. Ah! at last, at last! *(to the Count, who holds her back.)* Don't you see it is my child, Monsieur, my little boy who is suffering there; he must be saved. Let me open that door. Yes—— you ask?—— Yes—— I—— know—— Yes! let me go, will you. *(With fury.)* Let me go, you coward!

THE COUNT, *coldly, between his teeth*. Listen to me, Madame. The child who is lying there gasping for breath, is not mine; but he *is* yours. Save him! Speak! On my honour I will not open that door until you have named his father.

MARTHE. This is murder!

THE COUNT. If you hold your tongue, it *is* murder; and it is you who will have committed it.

MARTHE. Can you be such a coward!

THE COUNT. You know well enough I am no coward. Put me face to face with the man, that I may not be the death of the child.

ROBERT, *without*. Open the door, uncle! or it will be too late.

THE COUNT. Wretched creature, don't you see your child is dying? Will you not speak! *(He drags her to the cradle.)*

MARTHE. Ah! so much the worse for us all!—— Open the door to his father!

THE COUNT *gives a deep groan, then rushes towards the door, after snatching up a pistol; but lays it down again and opens the door*. No: let him save the child—— I have promised!

SCENE IV.

ROBERT, THE COUNT, MARTHE, THE SISTER, LISBETH

ROBERT *enters precipitately without noticing anything; he is followed by the sister and Lisbeth. (He is much excited.)* Why, you must have been both beside yourselves! *(He enters the sick-room)* Yes, I see what is the matter, the child is in a fit. Get me some water ready, and allow me, uncle, to close this door; there is need at this moment of the greatest quietness. I will call both of you as soon as I have got the better of this crisis. There is nothing, nothing to be afraid of; upon my oath the child is in no danger. *(Shuts the door.)*

SCENE V.

THE COUNT, MARTHE

THE COUNT *comes towards Marthe who is on the floor, her head buried in a chair, as though stricken down,—he sits near the Prie-Dieu which stands by her arm-chair then raises Marthe's head, and both speak in each other's ear.* This man has been your lover long?

MARTHE. My lover?— No, my executioner— Yes, you quite understand do you not, Monsieur, that I am going to tell you the truth? *(The Count nods affirmatively.)* Two years ago—and my child, suffering there!— Two years ago you were ordered to Morocco, I was to accompany you, but was forced to stay with my mother who had been taken seriously ill. Your nephew, Doctor Robert, was attending her, and by your orders they made him up a bed in your dressing-room, near my mother's chamber. Your departure had left me terribly sad, and I was perpetually in tears. Your nephew taxed his ingenuity to amuse me, insinuated himself into my thoughts, and stole my confidence by his devotion to my mother and his pretended affection for you. I soon saw I was mistaken in him. My mother once out of danger, I begged you to let me rejoin you; you remember that well enough, do you not?— Oh! let me listen! *(She goes to the door.)* Nothing. I can hear nothing. *(She comes back.)* You do remember, don't you?

THE COUNT. I remember. Your letter was so pressing that I sent you an answer by telegram to set out the next day, the twelfth of September.

MARTHE. Yes. That same evening I read your telegram to my mother, and let her know of my determination to go away the next day but one. Your nephew was present, he raised his head sharply, and said in a voice I hardly recognised : "Go away! Go away! the thing's impossible." And under my mother's questioning gaze, he flushed and withdrew without saying more.

THE SISTER, *half-opening the door.* Jean is doing well, Jean is much better, Madame. Take courage! God has heard us!

MARTHE. Ah! bless you for that word. (*She raises herself on her knees.*) Oh! monsieur, take pity on me!

THE COUNT, *gently.* Courage, God has heard you! (*He points to the sick-chamber.*)

MARTHE, *on her knees, facing the audience.* I was in my room; it was eleven o'clock; I had fallen, with my eyes shut, into a reverie; but my mind was awake, I was thinking of the joy of seeing you again. I was dreaming of the lovely country your letters described to me and that I, too, was about to visit. Suddenly the thought of your nephew shot through my dream and my heart felt a pang as at the approach of some disaster. To escape this besetting vision, I opened my eyes. A man was there, in front of me, fearfully pale, but bold and resolute. I put out my arms to drive away what I thought was a phantom; my two wrists were seized, crushed in a grasp of iron, that awoke me to the reality of my woe. Beside myself with terror, I fell at your nephew's feet, entreating him not to outrage your honour. I recalled to him your kindness, your tenderness towards him. The man was mad. He heard nothing, he breathed incoherent words into my ear and caught me so tight in his arms that I cried with pain. Ah! what a horrible, what an abominable scene. (*She bursts into tears.*)

THE COUNT. I spare you the pain of going on with your story, and myself the disgust and despair of hearing it.

MARTHE. Oh! pity, I love you.

THE COUNT. Perhaps!— (*to himself.*) The eleventh of September, the thirteenth, two days later, I received a telegram from your mother telling me you were very ill and unable to rejoin me.

MARTHE, *coming back*. Oh! I longed for death during that cruel illness, but one can't die for wishing it. Alas! you returned to Paris on the ninth of November, I was hardly convalescent, but I had regained my strength of will and I wanted to tell you all.

THE COUNT. Why did you not do so?

MARTHE. Because I am only a woman and was afraid! not for myself, not for myself, but afraid for the break-up of your happiness, of your love. Seeing you so terrified by the danger I had been in, so radiant with joy at clasping me again in your arms, I became a coward—To-morrow, to-morrow, I will tell him. Alas! days turned into weeks, and still I said to-morrow. It was my adoration for you that made me, by my silence, the wretch's accomplice—Held back by my own love, encouraged by yours, I found in your happiness an excuse for the revolt of my conscience. Oh! I am a miserable woman—have pity on me!

THE COUNT. I cannot have pity. (*He raises her head and looks in her eyes.*) So, when I was lying by your side, you already knew.

MARTHE. Ah! Monsieur, you are cruel—Well, then! yes, I knew I bore in my bosom the proof of your dishonour, Yes, on the eve of your arrival, it was still in my thoughts. But the cry which brought me to your arms made me forget everything. I was intoxicated with your words, burnt with the flame of your passion, and when on the morrow I awoke by your side, I perceived I had been guilty of an infamy.

THE COUNT. And then you called trickery and lies to your aid and shewed not a gesture, not a word, not a tear, nothing that might reveal the truth to me—Arrant fool, dull blockhead that I am. (*He strikes himself with rage.*) And I laughed—I laughed aloud—with pride, when they shewed me that child; a wonder, said the old Doctor, a wonder for a seven month's baby, and not one cry of indignation or pity came from your lips—when I held that child in my arms. Ah! you miserable coward of a woman!

MARTHE. Have mercy on me! Put an end to my life of torture by killing me outright.

THE COUNT. You have said that before.

MARTHE, *sobbing*. My God!— my God!— my God!

THE COUNT. Ah! weep, weep away, if your tears flow to eternity they can never wash clean the gaping wound in my heart. Weep and pray, for one who is about to die.

MARTHE. Oh! you would kill my child!

THE COUNT. The cry of the female for her young, before the cry of the wife— no, it is the father I would kill— Unless he should kill me.

MARTHE. Fight!— fight with that man! The thing is impossible, hateful— No, I won't let you, I won't let you. I love you, I adore you; punish me, banish me, but do not set me trembling for you—
(*She drags herself along on her knees.*) Hear me, one second, come— just one second— I swear to you, there is another way— suppose—

THE COUNT. What?

MARTHE. No— I forgot— I can think of nothing, but you— you— Ah! I am accursed— pardon me, pardon me. If you knew how I love you.

THE COUNT. And even if I were to pardon you, unhappy woman. Do you suppose that pardon brings forgetfulness with it? But be it so, there is a chance for you to earn your pardon, along with my pity. Listen. In a few minutes the wretch in there will open that door and I shall keep him here. You will go into that room, will close that door, and whatever noise you may hear, however terrible may be the drama conjured up by your imagination, you will neither open the door nor cry for help.

MARTHE. How horrible!— But if the sister?—

THE COUNT. Find a way of turning aside her suspicions— for that you will only have to call up old recollections— Understand this further and bear well in mind what I am going to say to you. It may be that I shall be killed. In that case you will go away with your mother and your children. You will bury with me the infamous secret for ever, and you will accomplish your vow, to stay at Roche-Brune until the day of your death.

MARTHE. I swear to you to deserve your pity by my courage— I will not open that door— I will not cry out— I will wait—

Ah! (*shivering, and her teeth clattering*) poor, poor me! (*The door slides gently along its groove. —Robert has his back turned, speaking in a low voice to the sister, who makes a sign that they may enter.*)
What, it has come—— it is finished there, and is going to begin again here—— I am afraid.

THE COUNT (*draws her gently towards him*). Go to your child's side.

MARTHE, *looking him in the face*. How good you are! I love you with all my soul. (*She goes slowly towards the sick-chamber. Robert comes out, pale and agitated, with his sleeves turned up, he drops into an arm-chair and wipes his forehead. Marthe looks at them both and slides the two leaves of the door along the groove, the door shuts. The Count goes up to the door, lets down the heavy curtain, then comes back by the side of Robert. He speaks in a low voice.*)

SCENE VI.

THE COUNT, ROBERT

THE COUNT. He is safe?

ROBERT. Yes, but very weak. Ah! I can hardly tell. May be I have accomplished the impossible.

THE COUNT. You can do nothing more for him? He is no longer in need of your science? Answer me, will you?

ROBERT. I can do nothing more, but wait and hope. Ah! I would give my heart's blood to save him, I swear.

THE COUNT *gives a violent start, then checks himself*. Yes, you love him like a father. (*Robert raises his head and looks at the Count. The two men are face to face. The Count, with glaring eye, and twitching mouth, livid, without uttering a word, gazes searchingly into Robert's eyes. The latter recoils in terror and gives a hoarse cry.*)

THE COUNT. Silence, you knave! Do not disturb your son!

ROBERT, *after a pause*. Well! what is it you want?

THE COUNT. I want my revenge.

ROBERT. So be it! Kill me.

THE COUNT. No, I cannot kill you. You are my poor brother's son.

ROBERT. But I will not fight with you.

THE COUNT. Nor I with you.

ROBERT. What, then do you want?

THE COUNT. I repeat, I want my revenge.

ROBERT. I do not understand.

THE COUNT. Lend me your ear for two minutes. An officer is called away on duty to Africa. He goes, leaving his wife, his mother-in-law, and his daughter in the charge of his nephew, a nephew who is almost a son to him, for he has taken the orphan boy into his home and been responsible for the lad's education. On his return, the unhappy man learns that his wife has been vilely outraged, he learns that the child he thought his own is the offspring of the crime. Mad with indignation, he seeks to kill the man who has dishonoured him, and, confronted with him, he finds the thing impossible. His blood boils, as if it would burst his veins, his heart beats as though to crush through his breast, he has to still his heart, to keep back his blood. He must not, he cannot take his revenge himself.

ROBERT. I understand, do not go on. It is the other man, the one who is almost his son who must avenge his honour, it is the other man who must slay the wretch. So be it! but believe me, uncle, that other is more unhappy than infamous. Keep a thought of pity for him.
(He approaches the table on which the pistol is lying and lays his hand on it.) Ah! I have a right to speak, since I am going to die. Yes, I have suffered every torture that passion inflicts on its victims. I struggled for seven years against the rising influence of the love for which I die. I struggled for seven years and I am now only twenty-eight. My affection, my respect for you, my gratitude fought against my passion, but in vain. In spite of your entreaties, nay, of your orders, I left your house. I took to flight! For four long years I lived aloof from you all. I made myself drunk with science, and wallowed in debauch. At length, they brought me back to you one day with a bullet in me, all for the honour of a worthless woman who bore some resemblance to *her*. When I opened my eyes, it was she who was by my side. It was she who nursed me. She who filled the room with her presence and regained entire possession of me. Beside myself with terror, I wanted to get away, but my wound was long in healing, you were unwilling to let me go. Then I stayed, yielding to my fate in despair, suffering every kind of torture, jealous of your love, and foreseeing that one day would find me a criminal. The inevitable moment arrived. My

senses, sharpened by jealousy and desire, my brain beset by the thought of your bliss, mastered me. I was mad, and, have no remorse, uncle, for I am now as distractedly in love, as furiously jealous as seven years ago and in still lower depths of despair. Ah! I am not seeking an excuse, I am giving you an explanation and asking you for a regret—— Farewell, uncle. *(He takes the pistol, and opens his coat. At this moment, Marthe utters a despairing cry.)*

MARTHE. Dead! my son is dead! he is dead! *(On hearing this cry, the Count goes up to Robert and seizes the hand which grasps the pistol. Lisbeth has opened the doors, and raised the curtain. The sister is on her knees, saying aloud the prayer for the dead. Marthe is on her knees, sobbing.)*

THE COUNT. Earthly justice is now useless, Monsieur. Let us bow to the justice of Heaven.

(Curtain).

SARAH BERNHARDT.





FAËLLA

Once every year, just before the fall of the leaf, I make a pilgrimage to this part of the forest of Fontainebleau. A passionate longing after my favourite haunt draws me, like some compelling charm, till I have come almost to believe that I should let some tangible good escape me, were I to fail in the tryst I have yearly kept with the great Aspremont pines, ever since one memorable autumn long ago, the tale of which I am now to tell. From afar I scent their warm resinous breath; above the rough sandstone boulders round which their gnarled roots twine, they beckon me; they call and I obey. The same autumn day finds me every year at my post on that plateau round which the billowy forest surges, just as long ages ago, the waters raged throughout the whole of this vast landscape, leaving the traces of their fury still visible in the bewildering chaos of rocks.

And what have I come out to see? What but the pageant prepared for me by October, that king of colourists. I have come to watch the golden jewels drop one by one from the pale soft tresses of the birch,

to gaze my fill at all this pomp of scarlet and bronze, flaming against the sea of softer green, leaping into keen life under every ray of sunshine, dying into smouldering gloom at every passing cloud; to peep into this gorgeous casket whose gems winter will presently seize and scatter. And it is this very note of coming destruction that gives the scene half its charm. The wind-rocked tree-tops, blackened by the summer glare, seem to murmur a farewell. The vague faint perfume that fills me with a sense of troubled melancholy is in itself a messenger of decay; these glowing tints are fairy colours, fading in a day; the flame of these burning bushes will die out as I look. Let me then drink in all this brief beauty while I may; let me even give myself up to a hope, baseless and shadowy as the hope of dreaming once more a dream from which we have awakened, that little Faëlla will presently stand before me.

I had been watching the setting of the sun; I had waited to see him drop blood-red behind a curtain of thick black cloud, and now I began to wander downwards among the junipers, following the little zig-zag paths that gleam white through the ruddy purple of the heather. Suddenly I heard just below me a young voice singing; the voice of a woman or of a boy, I could not tell which; a little harsh, but fresh and tuneful. There was something in the ring of that uncultured contralto that would have betrayed its Italian origin at once to my ears, even without the help of the words it carolled—those of a popular *canzone* :

*Benedetta sia la madre
Che ti fece così bella...*

it shrilled, with the characteristic twang of Roman or Florentine streets. I hurried along through a grove of forest trees to which my little path had led me. After many a turn and twist about the knoll, I came suddenly upon a strange—I had almost said, a fantastic figure, a figure that looked like a relic of the fifteenth or sixteenth century, busily stripping the berries from the holly bushes, which were very plentiful in these parts. In an instant the forest was transformed for me into a Shakesperean background—one of those enchanted woods near Athens, where clowns and fairies and princesses met and sported when Theseus ruled. And yet this

first of the *dramatis personae* to trip upon the sun-flecked carpet of moss was not quite of an age to figure in a "Midsummer-Night's Dream," the age of love's illusions and blunders. She could scarcely have been more than twelve years old, but the trailing skirt of her large patterned brocaded gown gave her a fictitious height and a sort of majesty. Her youthful figure had nothing of the sylph, but was of a firm, robust and sturdy build, set off by a bodice laced in front over a chemisette, after the fashion of those in which Holbein painted Elizabeth Tudor and Anne of Cleves. Her whole costume was of the same date, the quaint head-dress from which a white veil floated behind almost to her feet, the pouch, suspended by cords of curious workmanship, and swaying and catching at every sudden movement of the strange little wearer, who seemed to be as heedless of the thorns for her fingers as for her toilette. The noise of my approach, interrupted her in her work, and checked the song upon her lips; she turned with an air of questioning authority, mouth still slightly open, eyes wide and brilliant, like jet in a setting of pearl; her whole attitude saying plainly: "Where do you come from? What are you doing in my domain?" She, on her side, seemed to read an answering note of interrogation in my look, for, not waiting for me to speak, she held out a fold of her gown, displaying a wealth of scarlet berries that looked like coral beads and said gravely: "They are for a necklace."

Her voice in speaking was less pleasant than in singing—hard, a little hoarse, and to tell the truth somewhat vulgar, far removed in quality from the silvery treble of an ideal princess, and the gesture that emphasized the speech was common enough.

I told myself with satisfaction that the unabashed little person, who thus began uninvited, was likely to be communicative, and that I should soon get to the bottom of the queer mystery of her appearance—the contrast of her plebeian manners with her mediæval dress, and Italian beauty of the highest type. For she was Italian to her finger-tips; her features of a regular sculptural cast; the brow low and shadowed by thick black hair, cut square across like a page's; the complexion pale and very dark, but clear, with a delicate yellow transparency as of amber; the jaw

rather massive; cheeks and chin of that soft roundness which is apt to degenerate into heaviness before its time, but which, in this case, melted with harmonious lines into the firm young neck, round and smooth as a marble column, surmounting a pair of broad, square shoulders. While I took in these details she resumed her work, and as she gathered her future necklace, glanced furtively every now and then at me from under the long silky lashes that veiled her dark eyes, and lent an indescribable melancholy to her statuesque features, which not even the frank smile of a little full red mouth could brighten much. I stood motionless on the lowest ledge of the rock, lost in wonder. Why did she not wear the usual dress of a Trasteverina?

I was just going to ask her, when a loud, sharp whistle seemed to pierce the foliage, and made her prick up her ears. It was repeated almost immediately, then loudly and imperiously, a third and fourth time, and I saw the child's clear brown cheeks flush guiltily.

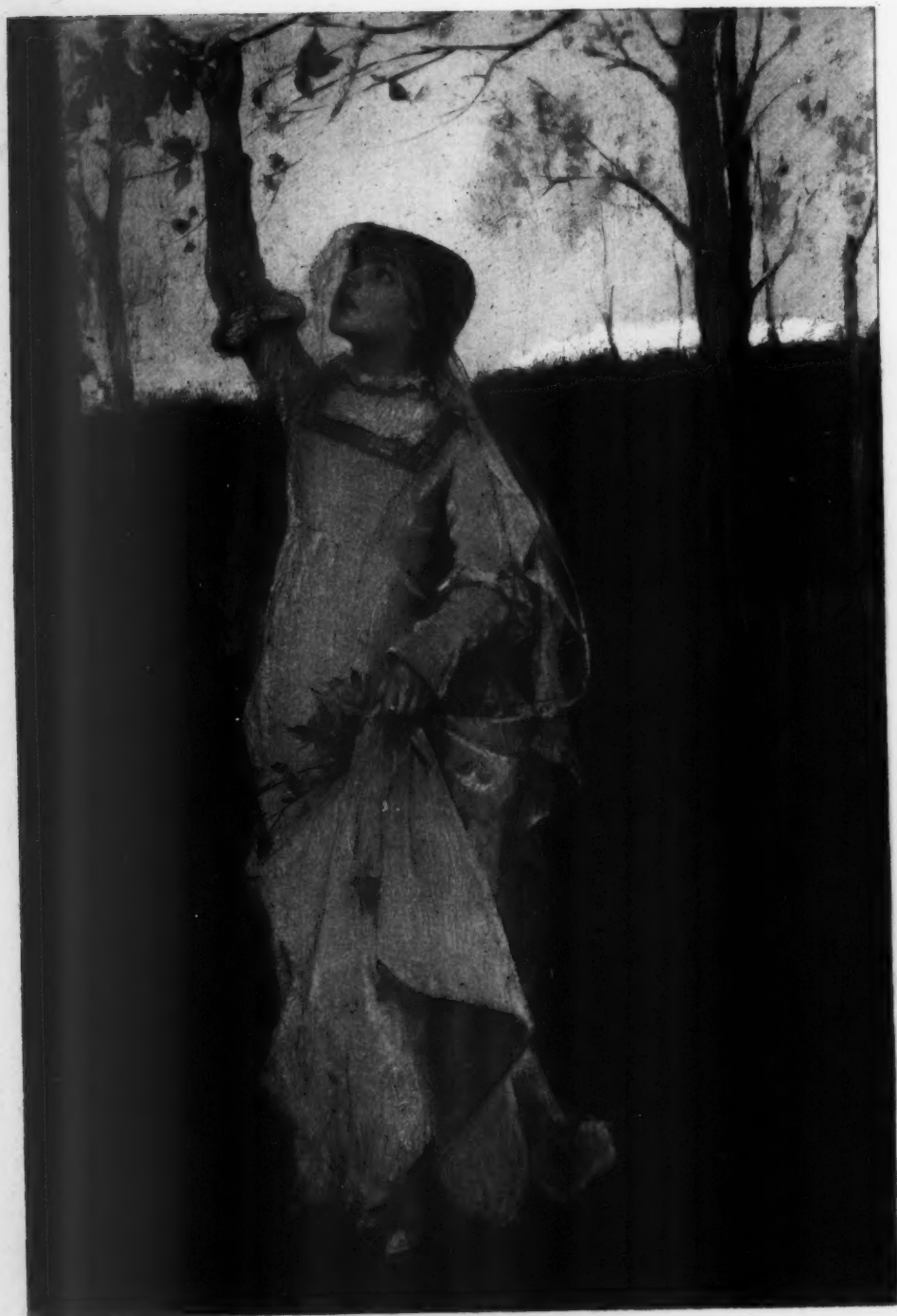
"What is the matter?" I asked.

"My master is angry with me," was her reply, and gathering up her skirts in both hands, she set off running, making a plentiful display of a pair of well rounded legs in coarse knitted stockings.

I followed her as fast as I could, but she seemed to skim along like some will-o'-the-wisp, flitting through the long forest aisles that opened out before us so swiftly that it was hopeless to think of catching her up, and in a few minutes I had even lost the guiding flutter of her white veil. Fortunately the red berries she thought safely garnered in her skirt, escaped by degrees from some treacherous loop-hole as she ran, and I followed in their track, as Tom Thumb followed his pebbles in the fairy tale. They led me towards the outskirts of Barbizon, from which direction the whistle sounded again and again, in a tone of shrill irritation.

Leaving the forest alleys behind me, I came suddenly upon a sort of screen of rough planks, forming an *al fresco* atelier, and enclosing a corner of the landscape—a moss grown rock, surrounded by giant ferns, and rugged sward that bristled with tall bent-grass, and straggling broom.

"I gave you half an hour," said some one behind the hoarding; "I told you not to be a moment longer, and you calmly take yourself





off for an hour and a half! Where the deuce have you been?"

The words, uttered in a tone of biting severity, were spoken in French but with an almost imperceptible English accent.

"Where were you? Answer, will you?"

The child began to stammer out excuses. She had run down to the village, and Mère Fouchard had kept her working in the house.

"And did you make that rent across your veil in the house? And those green stains on your skirt?"

The culprit was silent, and after a brief pause the man added in a contemptuous tone: "You will never tell the truth; I can never trust you. Here, make haste, take all this away."

A minute later, my little princess came out of the boarded enclosure, looking terribly sheepish and crest-fallen. She was carrying, certainly without any apparent effort, an easel, a paint-box, and a whole collection of such-like gear. Her skirt was tucked into her sash, and her veil rolled carefully round her neck. Seen in the broad glare of day, her finery looked poor and tawdry enough; it was, after all, nothing but shreds and tinsel, that the green glamour of the forest had transfigured.

The little wearer herself was the only thing that lost nothing upon closer scrutiny.

As she passed, she shot a glance of intelligence from under her lashes.

"You have had a scolding?" I whispered.

She blushed, and nodded affirmatively.

"Why did you not tell the truth?"

She hesitated for a moment, with downcast eyes; then, throwing back her head, replied: "He would have thought me such a baby."

"Because you idled in the woods, gathering a necklace? Isn't that natural enough at your age?"

Then, urged, I fear, rather by curiosity than by a stern sense of morality, I added: "There's no harm in amusing one's self, but there is in telling fibs."

With a little pout, half sulky and half satiric, she shrugged her shoulders, and marched off with her load towards the village.

A few minutes after her departure, I was scandalized to see the man she called her master, and who made her a little beast of burden, saunter out of the enclosure, swinging his arms, and smoking a cigarette.

He was a tall, strapping, fair-haired fellow of about thirty; on his head he wore a tweed cap, and his legs were cased in knickerbockers and leather gaiters. The characteristic note of face and figure lay in a certain arrogant hauteur of demeanour.

I asked an old peasant who was gathering dead sticks whether he knew the stranger.

"Know him? Why, that's M. Carton," exclaimed he, with an amazement that gave me to understand I had made a sort of confession of imbecility in proclaiming my ignorance of M. Carton.

"Aren't you lodging at Gaune's," the old fellow went on in a confidential tone.

I explained that I had only arrived that morning.

"Then does M. Carton lodge at Gaune's?" I ventured next.

"Oh dear no!" replied my interlocutor, with a visible pity for my benighted state. "He has got his rooms at Mère Fouchard's, the same as every year, but he takes his meals at Gaune's, which is always packed full of his sort."

"His sort? What sort?"

"Why, famous painters, of course! You will see their pictures in the picture-room. There are some of M. Carton's there."

"Then who is that little girl with him?"

"Oh that's Faëlla, little Faëlla; he brings her every year to wait upon him," replied the old man, in a tone which clearly set me down as an eccentric, who knew nothing about anything.

I should perhaps have cut a less contemptible figure in my friend's eyes, if his Seine-et-Marne accent had not hopelessly mangled the English name of Carlton. Hugh Carlton was a painter whose work—"The Cornfield"—had recently gained a medal, and had attracted a good deal of attention by certain extraordinary effects of aerial perspective and atmospheric distance. The fact that such *tours de force* are in fashion just now does not compensate, to my mind, for the total lack of interest in

the motive. I am of an age which makes it difficult for me to accept impressions and blotches as pictures. It was not for nothing that in my youth I worshipped the grand style and the compositions of Ingres!

*
* *

I knew no one among the guests assembled that evening round the dinner-table at Gaune's, which I found to be a rustic inn at some distance from the forest, lying at the opposite extremity of the village street. The character of the place has since been considerably modified by the removal of the doors, panels and wainscot on which so many great artists had scribbled their names under some hasty sketch, to a larger and more ornate room, better calculated to satisfy *bourgeois* ideas of comfort. At the time of which I write it was a rare event for any stray tourist of my kind to wander in among the artists. I had been put into a room over the cow-house, reeking with the odours from below. Curtains and paper there were none, and the naked walls were scrawled all over like the leaves in an album—an album, I may observe parenthetically that had nothing in common with the “keepsakes” sacred to young ladies.

My left hand neighbour in the long low dining-room was a fat animal painter. He wore a large reddish brown felt hat, apparently screwed down upon his bald head, and looked like nothing so much as some strange variety of huge toad-stool. The chair on my right stood empty, and it was not until after the soup had gone round that it was taken possession of by little Faëlla's imperious master, whose grave correctness of manner contrasted oddly with an eccentric costume of white mohair which his free and easy French brothers, all sworn enemies of a dress coat, laughed at as his “war-paint.” He took little part in the boisterous merriment that surrounded him, pretending at one time not to understand, at another, exaggerating his foreign accent in his answer to some too direct remark. It was evident that he prided himself upon being of a different species, and held aloof from the others.

“A disagreeable, hypocritical prig,” whispered the mushroom on my left. He must have been bursting to deliver himself against the enemy,

for we had not yet exchanged a word, but I had already reflected that the Englishman's phlegmatic calm was likely to have afforded an irritating contrast to the noisy gaiety, the loose chatter, and general abandonment of the rest of the company.

This consisted of about a dozen men, all more or less unkempt and unshaven, all dressed in short morning jackets, and all smoking without ceremony in the intervals of their meal. The few women at table were, it was easy to see, all of a certain class, though two or three of them seemed to be acting the part of wife with more thoroughness than the others. A substantial blonde, with a tweed cap perched on her light hair, had her son, a little dirty noisy wretch of four or five, upon her lap, and was feeding him off her own plate. The only woman with any pretensions to grace or beauty, a lady of the corps de ballet, thought it necessary to mince and look shocked at every little extra freedom of speech, and laughed affectedly at the notion of eating cabbage soup out of earthenware.

"She comes after Wymer," said my left hand neighbour the toadstool, who had taken upon himself to put me up to the ways of the house.

The name sent a sudden thrill through me—the name of one of the most famous champions of the art of 1830, Wymer the rival of the Duprés, the Daubignys and the Corots—and I looked eagerly round the table in search of the great man.

"Oh! you're thinking of the father," remarked my cicerone. "No, that's the man, the young fellow opposite, with the pointed beard. There are two or three of such sons of giants among us, men who are utterly crushed by the burden of a great name; very good fellows too, in their way, but poor sticks indeed, beside their fathers. There is a lot of talk nowadays about heredity. I can't say I believe in it as regards talent, do you?"

The pretty *coryphée* was all this time keeping up a fire of giggling whispers in the ear of young Wymer, whose pale, effeminate, gently regular features somehow suggested a far off echo of his great father's rugged face; but meanwhile she never ceased ogling the placid athletic Englishman opposite, who seemed entirely engrossed by his dinner, which he dis-

cussed with excellent appetite. Resting her elbow on the table, she jangled the golden links on a very white arm, smothered in a cloud of lace; the sound was clearly an oft-repeated little invitation which said, as plainly as words: "But just look at me! I am charming!"

"It's no use," remarked her lover, in a bantering tone of easy indifference, "he is thinking a great deal more of his dinner than of your fascinations."

"Is that true, Monsieur?" said the young woman audaciously, leaning forward to address Carlton, who looked up questioningly:

"Is what true, Madame?"

"That you care for nothing but your art."

"I love that above all, Madame, but there are a great many other things that I care for."

"Such as boxing," interrupted Wymer. "My dear Mouche, let me introduce to you a light of the 'Prize-Ring.'"

"Much as Lord Byron was," retorted the Englishman, just as Made-moiselle Mouche exclaimed with a little scream: "Oh! the horror!"

She checked herself at once, and murmured: "Lord Byron? The one who wrote poetry?"

"Certainly, Madame, just as I paint pictures; only perhaps a little better."

"Knocking down a man with one blow is all very well," went on young Wymer, with some malice, "I once saw Carlton measure himself against a professional Hercules in Paris, and fell him like an ox. A thing like that, gives a man *prestige*." A buzz of admiration rose among the ladies. "But," continued he, raising his voice, "even if I had your iron muscles, my dear fellow, I should not like to make use of them against children."

"What do you mean?" demanded Carlton, icily.

"Didn't you box little Faëlla's ears the other day?"

"Possibly. She took it into her head, in a fit of zeal, to dust a canvas I had left to dry; you can imagine the result. That's the fashion in which she cleans up, when she cleans at all, and when she has once tidied a place, nothing is to be found henceforth. I *must* train her—

but I don't think I can have hurt her very much. Do you mean to tell me she came and complained to you?"

"Not at all, on the contrary, I came upon her, very red in the face, laughing and crying at the same time. I asked what was the matter, and she answered triumphantly: 'My master has beaten me. It is the first time he has ever touched me.' You must confess that women like to be beaten," added Wymer, turning to his neighbour, who protested vehemently, but nevertheless glanced admiringly across at the delicate white hands of this pugilist with wrists of iron, who boxed like Lord Byron.

"There are many households in which the woman has the upper hand," said the big blonde, in a deep voice. Her son had by this time subsided, and fallen asleep on his mother's bony breast.

"My dear child, no one is asking *you* to make confessions," broke in her husband, a consumptive little engraver, who looked exceedingly likely to get the worst of it in any difference of opinion between himself and his pseudo-spouse.

"A woman who has never been beaten doesn't know what love is," said some one sententiously from the end of the table; it was Boulotte, a handsome red-haired model, whose ill-combed locks had a long-standing reputation in the studios where they passed for the gold of Verona.

"Now, wouldn't any one think," cried an indignant voice, "that I had been breaking your bones all my life?"

"*You*, my poor dear! An old sheep like you!"

Every one began to laugh.

"You are really too ridiculous," said the ruddy Juno taking a second slice of meat for her dog; the beast was installed between her and "the old sheep," whose health Boulotte's numerous friends now drank uproariously, with much clinking of glasses.

Dogs played an important part at this meal; every painter had one with him, and the herd of spaniels, bull-dogs, terriers, poodles, and Newfoundlanders, formed a second circle of greedy and importunate diners.

Mademoiselle Mouche, having read Carlton's name upon the collar of one of the pack, began to court the master by means of caresses and tit-

bits lavished upon the dog. She finished by pressing her painted lips in a long kiss between the animal's silky ears. He recoiled from her, offended by the scents with which she was perfumed.

"After all," she resumed, raising her frizzled head, and darting a killing glance at Carlton, who went on placidly plying his knife and fork, "after all, I don't quite know who the happy woman is whom Monsieur has honoured with his blows."

"It is not a woman at all, Madame, but a child, as you have heard," replied Carlton with some impatience.

"Hum!" muttered Wymer in his moustache, "you may *call* her a child——"

"She can't really be more than twelve or thirteen," observed the toad-stool.

"That may be. But an Italian at thirteen——"

"Bah! an Italian from the Jardin des Plantes!" interrupted Carlton, whose ill-humour increased at every word.

"She is of a species that triumphs over transplantation. She could not be a more thorough Roman if you had found her on the steps of the Trinità-de-Monti, instead of in the Rue des Fossés-Saint-Victor."

"And besides, it is not necessary to have Roman blood in one's veins to be capable of love at twelve years old," struck in Boulotte, authoritatively. "I don't quite remember when *I* began, but I know it was much earlier than that."

"And look at *me!*" cried the mother of the odious urchin who had just woke up, and was screaming for his dessert. "Women are *born* in love!"

"Pleasant for poor old Grelu! She was past thirty when he first saw her," muttered Wymer, with a glance of pity at the engraver, who was philosophically paring an apple for his boy.

"Well, but who is this Faëlla?" persisted Mademoiselle Mouche.

"She is a little model, Madame, whom I have employed in Paris for many years. I sometimes bring her with me, and she helps in the house when she is not sitting."

The ballet-girl laughed cynically.

"Helps in the house! Oh, yes! We know what that means."

"It certainly doesn't require any great stretch of imagination," said Carlton coldly; "she brushes my clothes, and sweeps my studio." He folded up his napkin and rose.

"And is she pretty?"

"I dare say *you* would think her very ugly."

"And of course she adores you!" retorted Mademoiselle Mouche.

"If I thought that," said the painter bowing and turning to go, "I would turn her away this moment."

"You English never can take the least little joke!" cried an old painter with a face like a satyr, who was always proclaiming that he had renounced Fame, and proved his sincerity by daubs which just brought him in enough to settle his hotel bill. "Will you lend me your model, M. Carlton, I want her for my 'Gardens of Lucullus,' which must go into the *Bon Marché* Gallery at once."

"No, I couldn't possibly. We are very busy just now," replied Carlton with his hand on the door.

"And how are you getting on with your work?" asked Wymer, stretching himself. "I couldn't paint a stroke in the forest this morning."

"You perhaps had too charming a companion," called out Carlton, disappearing into the passage, and leaving Mademoiselle Mouche in the seventh heaven of delight. Her eyes and her smile betrayed the thoughts that were flitting through her brain.

"He is jealous!" she was saying to herself, "jealous of Wymer, who isn't a patch upon him! How angry he was at my jokes about that girl! Poor fellow, he didn't like me to think he had a fancy for any one else! He actually offered to send her away if I liked!— It was plain enough!— Men are queer creatures!— But this Englishman has only to ask—"

If Mademoiselle Mouche had made me her confidant, I could not have followed her reflections more entirely, so indiscreet was her pretty little piquant mask. Young Wymer was no doubt even more skilled in the reading of it than I, for he remarked with some malice :

"That girl will make Carlton a splendid mistress in a year or two.



And he's a sharp fellow! He's bringing her up harshly, and moulding her to suit his own character, which isn't of an easy going sort. The poor little monkey works hard, though Carlton pays her well, for he's a rich man and generous enough"—Mademoiselle Mouche looked interested—"but she has a pretty rough time of it, both as model and servant."

"Mignon—Lara's page!" hazarded some one with pretensions to culture.

Whereupon Boulotte began to hum, "Knowest thou the land," to shew, I suppose, that she, too, had been to the Opéra-Comique, and another lady, very dirty, and hopelessly ugly, said disdainfully: "What an idea! Bringing foreigners into the place when there are plenty of their betters close at hand."

"Oh! the natives are too ugly for anything!" said the mushroom, "not that it matters much to me. I only want cows!—"

"I have always sat to my husband—haven't I *Ugène*? You have never had any model but me?"

The wretched *Eugène* stammered something about necessary economy, and ended with this profound remark: "Money is a great advantage to an artist."

"Don't tell me that," said the old goat-bearded spoiler of canvases; "Poverty is the soul of fertility. Look at the great masters. Take the history of Adrian Brouwer, to go back to the Deluge. He had never a farthing to bless himself with; he lived in the greatest squalor; he was never out of the pot-house except to hastily earn enough to pay his bill—and he died in the hospital. He was a real artist. Don't talk to me of your Englishmen, and their painting. Their painting indeed! Shall I tell you what it is? Literature, and nothing else. It seeks for knots in a bulrush."

"Carlton has talent—very great talent," said Wymer, who for his own part was quite content to be merely a good-looking fellow, and to turn all the women's heads."

"I have nothing to say against his talent," replied the patriarch of the table, "though indeed the vagaries of his talent are laughable enough. He takes a dandelion or a cock-chaffer, and puts into it, the Lord knows

how, some mysterious expression of poetry and culture. But it is his hypocrisy that disgusts me. Wouldn't any one have thought just now that we were outraging an angel, when we joked about his little model? Isn't it too absurd, when one thinks of the Jardin des Plantes colony?"

There was a general laugh.

"A perfect nest of innocence and morality!——"

And every one began to tell some story bearing upon the horrors that poverty, close quarters, and a natural appetite for vice engender among the *pifferari* and Trasteverini who haunt Parisian studios.

"Have you ever seen Faëlla's parents?" asked the big blonde. "Like mother like child," she added, kissing her hideous offspring, who in fact, gave every promise of exactly repeating his mother.

And as they stirred their coffee, and passed the wine, they raked up every incident that could go to prove my little Shakesporean princess the vilest of creatures.

"If her master does treat her quite paternally, as Mère Fouchard declares, she must think him a great fool," said Boulotte, pushing back her sleeve to dip a lump of sugar in "the old sheep's" brandied coffee.

"At any rate, Mère Fouchard does," remarked Madame Grelu. "Do you know, he makes Faëlla sleep out of the house, with Mère Fouchard's little servant over the barn, to avoid scandal."

"What a humbug," said the admirer of Adrian Brouwer. "Oh! those English!"

* * *

I passed the next morning in the Artist's Show-room at Gaune's. The exhibition was not of a very high average. A masterly study of cattle, "The Drinking Pond,"—presented by my stout neighbour of the night before to the Club at Barbizon,—stood out to great advantage among a crowd of mediocre canvases chiefly remarkable for the curious impression of over-size and emptiness they left upon the mind—an effect due in nearly all of them to the want of any positive and clearly defined objects in the composition. Monotonous plains, stretching away in endless space; dreary banks of interminable rivers; no hint of selection, invention, intelligence,

nor even any great power of execution to atone for their absence; yet the best of them showed traces of fine feeling for light and atmosphere; and in many of these loosely handled studies, a certain charm of youthful ardour, sincerity and audacity triumphed even over a coarse and mannered realism. But these were rare exceptions; the dominant feature of the work as a whole was mere arrogant pretentiousness; it was, in fact, the fashionable Impressionism as treated by tyros; the only representative of the ancient school was the author of "The Gardens of Lucullus," whose ghastly daubs would have disgraced a decent sign-painter.

The two or three pictures contributed by Carlton, though unequal, were naturally conspicuous in such a medley. I recognized with great pleasure the glowing sketch out of which had grown "The Corn-field;" a vigorous germ, full of life and promise. I looked with special interest at the little gleaner walking bare-footed along the dusty road that bordered the field, her face half-hidden in the shadow of the sheaf upon her head, Faëlla—I found Faëlla again a little further off, a harder, darker rendering of her clear-cut profile, her head bound with the gaudy handkerchief worn by the peasant women of Seine-et-Marne, her back bowed, almost broken, so to speak, over the ridges of a potato-field. Though Hugh Carlton sometimes ventured in the track of our great Millet, he followed more confidently in the footsteps of his compatriot Burne-Jones. The secret of his originality, or rather of his *bizarrierie* lay in his introduction of figures conceived in the spirit of the English Pre-Raphaelite school, though almost invariably inspired by a model greatly too robust for the taste of modern æstheticism, into simple, faithfully rendered landscapes.

Faëlla figured again in "After the Storm," this time as a little shivering mountebank toiling across the vast wet expanse of the plain of Chailly, under a sky of rent clouds, to reach a gipsy van disappearing in the rain-washed distance. Faëlla in spangled tights, but half-concealed by the poor patched cloak, which draped the lithe young form, whether of boy or girl it was hard to say.

Presently I came upon Faëlla once again, but changed alike in age and in condition—a noble lady now, some high-born contemporary of Beatrice, dreaming a mystic April dream in an alley of tender foliage, under the

soft density of young spring shoots set between milky sky and emerald moss—the whole young beauty of the year delicately suggested in water-colour.

“Oh! we have worked very hard since last year,” said a voice behind me that I at once recognized.

I turned and saw Faëlla, in a short skirt and sabots; a handkerchief knotted very low on her forehead made her black eyes look larger and more brilliant than ever. She had come to fetch a pipe her master had forgotten.

“There are a great many different copies of you here, Faëlla,” I said; “which of your portraits do you like best?”

Without a moment’s hesitation she pointed to the melancholy majestic dame, trailing the rich draperies of her slender limbs on the damp moss.

“Because she is smartly dressed?”

“Most of all because of her book——”

“What book is it then?”

She shrugged her shoulders.

“Are you very fond of reading?” I asked.

The blood rushed into her cheeks.

“I?—— I can’t read—— but I shall learn some day, when I am grown up, when I have some money of my own—— if I ever have any. My parents take all that M. Carlton gives me.”

“To take care of it for you?”

Faëlla’s gesture was very expressive.

“Not exactly! My father drinks it all, and plenty more besides.”

She spoke without either horror or hesitation, as if she were talking of something quite natural.

“Is it possible?”

“Oh, yes! Everything he earns goes in the same way—and he earns a good deal. My father is a clever workman. When he is drunk he beats us. He’s not really cruel, but wine makes him do it. One winter he stabbed my mother with a knife. She still has the mark.”

“Poor woman!”

“Oh! as to that—— There’s a good deal to be said on the other side

too—— You don't know my mother. She's so lazy—and she scolds!—— I am the only one of us who really works."

Faëlla made these candid reflections upon her family in an airy tone, as with one hand upon her hip, she nibbled away at an apple.

"And do you like sitting as a model?"

"Oh! I would much rather read, write——

"And sew," I suggested.

"No, indeed—I hate sewing. I would much rather go bare-foot than mend my stockings. No. What I should like would be to read and write, like a lady—and to really wear dresses like a lady's,—dresses like Mademoiselle Mouche's,—dresses of my own. Did you notice that dress of Mademoiselle Mouche's with the little frills? Wasn't it pretty?"

I sighed as she made her *naïve* confession. With such instincts and predilections what would be the end of my little princess? It needed no prophet to sketch her future. Perhaps, after all, there was a spice of truth in the evil chatter of last night; but her next words rebuked me for my harsh judgment.

"When I am grown-up and rich," she said, "I shall live in the country, in the forest."

"Ah, that's right. You love the forest?"

"Oh yes! I am so happy in the woods—— one can breathe—— At home it is so dirty and stuffy, and the studios are so hot and full of tobacco-smoke. Yes, I shall live in the forest and above all, I shall go to Italy!" She said the word tenderly, with a sudden longing.

"Then your parents talk to you about Italy?"

"Yes, sometimes. But I have seen pictures of it, and besides, it is my own country."

She could not have said more eloquently : "It is my home. I feel it, I divine it, it dwells in me." And in truth, the very genius of that sunny land lay in her eyes, in her smile, in the sudden softening of her expression, in the brown pallor of her skin. I felt a great longing to know her better, and to help her.

"Listen," said I, "to learn reading and writing you must go to school."

"But my parents say it is too expensive, and that my brothers and I must earn money—not spend it."

"Have you many brothers?"

"I have three little ones."

"Aren't you sorry to be parted from them?"

She made a contemptuous gesture, and answered: "No, indeed, I am very pleased. I can't bear them. I hate children."

It must be confessed that her right impulses were not always to be depended upon.

"About this school business"—I began again—"M. Carlton seems really interested in you. I expect he would help you if you asked him."

"I dare say," said the strange child, leaning her head on one side, and looking critically at me; "but I am not going to ask him."

"Why?"

She answered only by a curious smile.

"Are you afraid of him?"

"A little."

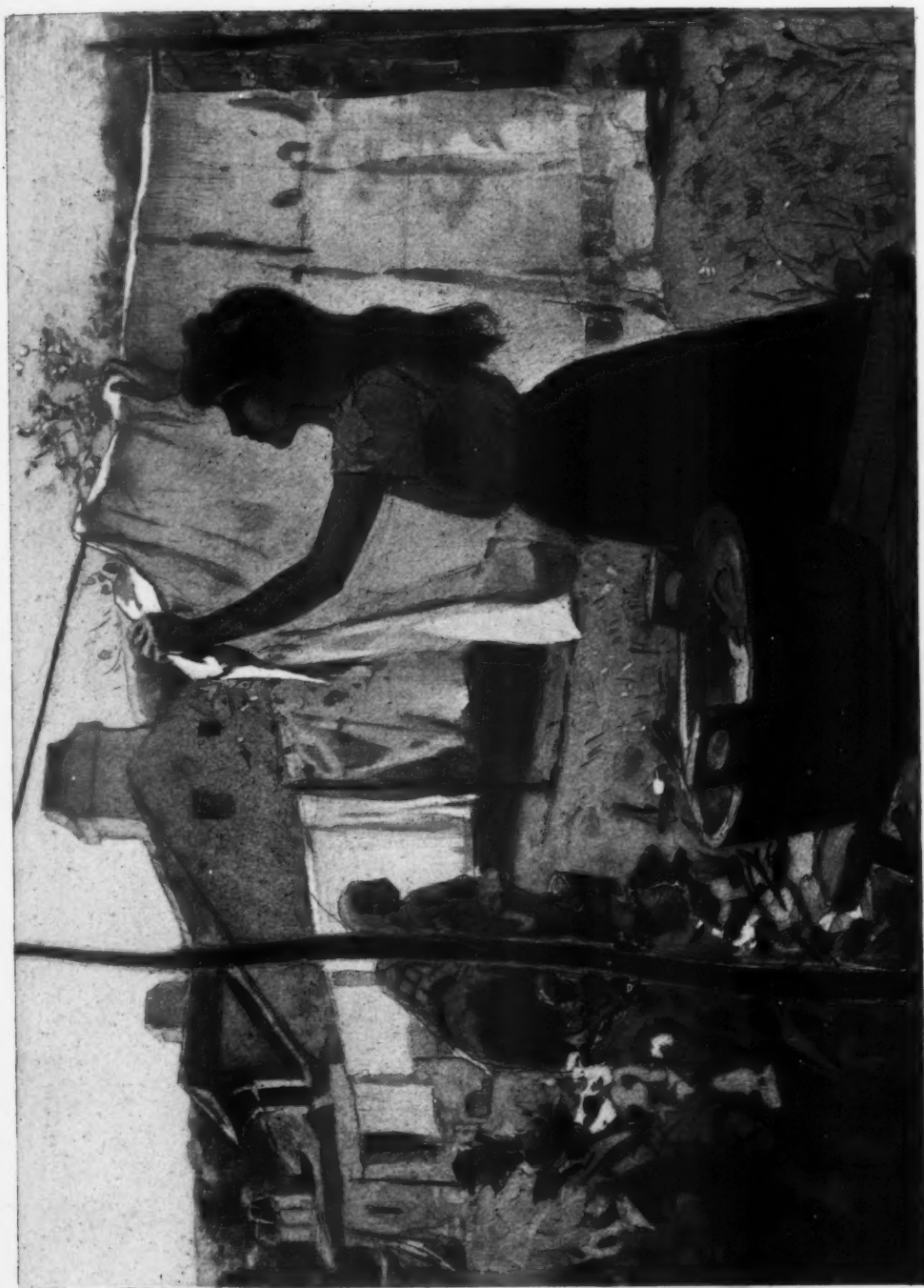
"But you are very fond of him, too?"

"Sometimes," she replied, still with the same strange unchildish smile; "but sometimes I hate him—yes, I hate him"—she repeated, a sullen fire burning in her eyes, her lips pressed fiercely together.

"I forgot," exclaimed Faëlla, in sudden alarm, "he is waiting for his pipe, he will scold me again for dawdling. Good bye, Monsieur."

An hour later I met her again in the village street, romping with the whole pack of artistic dogs, laughing, screaming, racing, teasing the beasts, who retorted by tearing an occasional mouthful out of her cotton skirt. She had relaxed into a simple twelve-year-old tom-boy. The patriarch of the society, passing by, stopped her and taking hold of her chin, said a few words to her, with the chuckling leer of an old Pan. The girl made no effort to free herself, but looking up in his face, retorted by a series of grimaces worthy of a countrywoman of Pulcinello.

"Kiss you! An old thing like you!—and so ugly!" she cried, calling me and her friends the dogs to witness the enormity of such a request with a gesture of inimitable drollery.



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Her frank laugh rang through the village street, but she had scarcely resumed her gambols with the dogs, when they were cut short in a moment by the approach of Carlton, who, cold and correct, passed into the inn without even glancing at her. The brightness died out of her brown face; she gathered up her disordered locks, tucking them under her head-dress and walked away soberly.

I followed at a distance. Faëlla entered the court-yard of a little house, with a rough staircase on the outside; the balustrade was festooned with faded tendrils, that earlier in the year must have been heavy with the lilac clusters of the wisteria, and sprinkled with white jasmine stars. An old woman was washing clothes; she threw an armful over to Faëlla, scolding her the while. My pretty Cinderella said nothing, but began to hang out the wet linen with evident distaste, dreaming no doubt of reading, and writing, and wearing gowns with silk frills, while Mère Fouchard—for I concluded that this must be Hugh Carlton's forest retreat—continued to wash and to scold.

During my stay at Barbizon, I would meet little Faëlla a dozen times in the day, and in as many different characters; sometimes helping in the house-work, ready dressed for her next sitting; sometimes in her peasant's garb, on the door-step, sulking over the hated needle-work; sometimes wandering alone among the rocks of Bas-Bréau looking for slow-worms to tame and hang in bronze circlets round her neck; sometimes wild and boisterous, playing in front of the inn with her friends the dogs, and the ragamuffins of the village, or darting off into some corner to administer sly chastisement to the hideous little Grelu, who, she said, was like her brothers, and needed whipping. Or, suddenly, I would find the bold hoyden transformed into a grave and pensive little woman, giving me much food for thought. When she looked at Carlton her eyes were full of a strange mingling of fear, reproach and tenderness, which he seemed to heed as little as the fawning of his dog Bob.

I watched her a good deal, being interested in the study of character, and anxious to read this little soul. But had Faëlla a soul? It seemed somewhat doubtful in view of the complete indifference to right and wrong manifested in her speech. We often talked together, for she

seemed to divine that I was an old man of a different sort to the one she had kept in his place so sharply.

I neither frightened her, nor gave her occasion to laugh at me. I heard that in speaking of me she generally called me "the old boy," and I was not at all offended. From our conversations I gathered that she was not highly intelligent, though sharp enough and quick in grasping things that were of immediate interest to her; without a shadow of modesty, to judge from the coarse, and even indecent phrases that fell from her beautiful lips. There was such discord between the pure lines and childish laughter of that charming mouth, and the words which it sometimes uttered, that I tried to believe she was repeating, parrot-like, things she had heard only too often, without knowing their meaning. I love and reverence childhood, and I was willing rather to be her dupe than to misjudge her, but Faëlla often gave rude shocks to my faith. I will give one such instance. One Sunday I went into Chailly church; near the door was Faëlla crouching on her heels in the familiar attitude adopted by women of the Trastevere in the aisles of their churches, which have neither benches nor chairs. Her motionless features were full of a rapt devotion, her eyes fixed with the holy ecstasy of Domenichino's St. Cecilia on the bare damp walls, while a toothless precentor quavered the *Domine Salvum*. I was touched by the fervour of her prayer, and when the service was over, I waited for her outside and told her I was glad to see her at church.

"Oh! I have always gone. Mother always sent me when work was slack, to the Models' mass, you know. Look, this came from Rome," she said, shewing me the large rosary I had already noticed in her devoutly folded hands.

"The Models' mass" I repeated, wonderingly.

"Why, yes. The mass at Saint-Étienne-du-Mont; one gets work there. The artists all know about it, and they come to choose models!"

So the kneeling attitude, the look of impassioned devotion, had all been drilled into her, for picturesque effect, with a vile hope of gain!

"But," said I, with a lingering hope, "you didn't come here to-day to make money?"

"No," said Faëlla, "but I have a new frock—" she turned round, to shew herself—"Oh, it's nothing much, but it will make the girls about here envious."

Her master must have been right when he told me, in one of our early interviews, that she was of an inferior species, the degenerate offshoot of a heathen race, whose one gift was beauty : beauty of a wholly animal type. It was the artist's part, he said, to use this raw material, and by his own genius to spiritualize it.

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* *

It is evident that Hugh Carlton secretly despises all races but the Anglo-Saxon ; his religion seems to consist in thanking God that he was born an English gentleman. The keynote to the man's whole character lies in his eminently British pride and in the sort of self-respect born of it.

I have omitted to say how the ice was broken between him and myself, in spite of his extreme reserve. I gained my end by the most direct and forcible piece of flattery one can address to a painter—in other words, by buying one of his pictures. This "In the Woods" has a curious charm for me. I can never look at it without feeling a sudden waft of the forest air, the aroma that clung round little Faëlla, as round some young dryad, bathed in woodland dew. Faëlla was not much given to any other kind of bathing ; indeed, fresh water was a scarce commodity at Barbizon, and this was one of the Englishman's grievances ; he was for ever grumbling at the difficulty of getting his tub filled twice a day. Faëlla had been ordered to draw the water from the well ; but then, she was so lazy !

Our parleys touching "In the Woods" had opened to me Carlton's studio, a great bare place, used chiefly as a shelter for innumerable studies, for the painter worked almost entirely in the open air, and kept all the dainty luxuriousness he delighted in for his Parisian *atelier*.

I saw on an easel the sketch of a picture in which Faëlla figured in her "Midsummer-Nights' Dream" costume. Her attitude recalled Burne-

Jones' "Sibylla Delphica; a bird perched on her finger, and at her feet lay a young boy, dressed in the style of "Le Passant" or "Le Chanteur Florentin" and gazing earnestly up at her. The puerile mannerism of this idyl, gave some colour to "the mushroom's" strictures, and his sarcastic dismissal of such works as "good articles of export." Carlton had made a mistake; he was himself perfectly aware of it, and stood by this weakest of his compositions with a touch of defiance in his mien, waiting for some compliment or criticism, either of which would have been very ill-received by him. I said nothing at all about the picture, but took refuge in the models, asking who had sat for him for his handsome page. He mentioned the young son of a famous painter living near and added:

"I shall use the sketch for something else. I don't mean to finish this. The poor boy can't have a very pleasant remembrance of his sittings. Faëlla made them perfect purgatory to him. She tormented him out of his life, to disgust him with the whole thing, and prevent his coming again."

"What was her object?"

"It was only professional jealousy."

"Ah! She doesn't like any one to sit to you?"

"No, she likes to be able to boast of what *we*—"M. Carlton and I" have done. That's their way, and it is wonderful how indefatigable the fear of not satisfying me as model and of being supplanted, makes the idle little animal. She has really been of great use to me. But there is an end to all things, and I have had about enough of her."

"You are tired of her bad temper, and her exactions?" I surmised.

"Oh! as to exactions I either ignore them or put them down with a high hand," he replied, somewhat brutally. "She knows that with me she must obey and hold her tongue. And I don't think she can be called bad-tempered exactly; she is only sly and sulky. And she torments animals like a true gutter child. Her greatest crime in my eyes is the way she behaves to my dog. She beats him—and no one is allowed to beat Bob but myself."

"Perhaps she is jealous of him too?"

"Very likely. She takes a dislike to everything that comes near me. Those Italians are good haters."

"Perhaps because they are good lovers," I remarked, avoiding the coldly scrutinizing glance fixed upon me. "The child seems to be immensely attached to you."

"Yes, I think she is, in her way. She will sit for hours with the utmost patience. In the excitement of work, I have sometimes forgotten that she is a creature of flesh and blood, and have taxed her strength almost barbarously, without the smallest murmur from her, though she is laziness itself in a general way. Isn't it odd, that sort of professional virtue?"

His hardness irritated me, and I said with some impatience:

"What is to become of her? what will her future be, do you suppose?"

"She will be very much what she is now, I fancy. She will stick to her calling, as long as her stock in trade lasts."

My visit over, we came down the outside staircase that led from the studio into the court-yard, and there discovered Faëlla, with a big apron round her, helping Mère Fouchard to peel vegetables.

"But I fancy," said I, "that she has other aspirations. She confided to me that she wished very much to learn reading and writing."

"Faëlla!" exclaimed Hugh Carlton, with as much amazement as if I had credited one of the squirrels in the forest with such an inclination. "Well, that's a fancy I can easily gratify."

He called to the child, who was sitting on the edge of the well with her lap full of potatoes, and when she came near he said gravely, but with a spice of sarcasm.

"What is this I hear, Faëlla? We want to become learned all of a sudden."

She darted a reproachful look at me. Her cheeks, her ears, her very forehead became crimson.

"Learned!— I!— I never wished to be more learned than I am. It's not true!"

"This gentleman tells me you confided in him. You need not blush, Faëlla. It is quite right of you. I will settle it with your parents, and

next winter you shall have both time and money to go to school."

"But——"

She put her hands to her throat as if she were choking, with a black look at me in which I read some such thought as : If I had my father's knife here, I would pay you out for this.

"But if you should want me at the time?" she said to Carlton at last.

"Want a model, do you mean? Well, I can get some one else. That will be easy enough," he replied carelessly. With a hasty gesture, she threw her apron over her head, and turned away. I thought I heard a sob. Carlton, who was lighting a cigarette, took no notice of it, and walked away.

My good intentions had missed fire.

(To be continued.)

TH. BENTZON.





THE SPHINX

A DREAM

UNCONTROLLED fancy sometimes has a logic of its own; even in the wildest vagaries of a dream it shows a method in its madness, and can point the moral of our more sober meditations. Nay, it may even suggest a poetical aspect of philosophic truth which lends it charm and commends it to our sympathy.

This, no doubt, is the reason why a dream I once had remains deeply graven on my memory.

It would be easy to relate its details in the very order in which they appeared to me; still, it must not be forgotten that in our dreams imagination casts off the restraint of reason, loses all sense of time and space, and ceases to recognize the laws of causation. The impossible becomes possible, and the most unlikely incidents seem quite simple and natural.

A visit to my physician gave rise to this dream.

I had for more than thirty years been on terms of intimacy and affection with this son of *Æsculapius*, who, though a foreigner, had formed a large connection in Paris. Knowing his horror of any kind of advertisement, I will call him *Prospero*, in remembrance of Shakespeare's magician. Like the fabled Duke of Milan in the "*Tempest*," my friend had such a far-reaching knowledge of nature, that in former times he would have been regarded as a wizard. To be sure he would never, like another *Faust*, have made a compact with the Devil, for the simple reason that he does not believe in the Devil, nor even in the existence of Evil. In the perpetual struggle for life he looks on everything as being as it ought to be.

For more than forty years, *Prospero* has devoted every minute which is not employed in the service of his patients to the study of the wonders of creation.

He has built himself a house on the heights of Montmartre. There he has an observatory, and his meteorological forecasts are regularly published in the newspapers. The drawing-rooms are filled with collections which are unique of their kind; more especially he has the finest microscopes which scientific industry can produce in England or in France. Not *Pasteur* himself has worked with the microscope more assiduously than *Prospero*. That evening, among other things, he had shown me a series of photographs of the dermal structures, lying in the human brain, between the vertex and the eyes; there were twelve hundred of them. The beauty and variety of these tissues when enlarged by the microscope, surpassed everything ever conceived of by the designers of China or Cashmere, not to mention European manufacturers.

Prospero would seem to possess the *Comte de Saint-Germain's* elixir; he has scarcely altered at all in the many years of our acquaintance. At a first glance, he might be taken for a Roman Catholic prelate. His figure, of middle height, is robust and firmly knit, and he has a singularly bland and powerful head.

On looking closer, however, the likeness disappears: the clear, keen eyes, the lips and chin, have nothing of the professional stamp which

characterises the priest, of whatever confession. Benevolent and philanthropic, Prospero is, above all, the minister of truth : his admiration of the wisdom of the Creator is enhanced by every discovery revealed to him by the telescope or the microscope.

That night we chloroformed and dissected several frogs, and Prospero had shown me the circulation of the blood and the telepathic ganglions of the nerves in the membranes of the unconscious creature. Bewildered by all I had seen and heard, it was daybreak before I made my way home, and to bed. I found it difficult to get rest; but sleep came at last, all the deeper for delay.

In my dreams I returned to Montmartre. I was received by Prospero.

"You have come in the very nick of time," he said. "The balloon I have invented is just filled; all we can require has been placed in the car, we have only to be off."

The huge machine was ready in the garden, and we started on the voyage.

How long we were rising, I know not; I had completely lost all count of time. Prospero begged me to get out of the car : "We are at our journey's end," he exclaimed. "We have reached the point from which Archimedes said he could move the world."

The first thing that struck the eye was a range of immense snow-clad mountains, and gigantic glaciers. I was still gazing at these, when Prospero directed my attention to what was to be seen at our feet. My sight had acquired a power which the best telescopes could not give. Far below, I saw a globe revolving and moving through space. I presently recognized it as the Earth, lighted first on one side, and then on the other; the peaks of the Himalayas and of Chimborazo seemed, in turn, to be close under our feet.

I was watching the everlasting waltz which our planet dances round the sun, with growing wonder, when my guide said to me : "That is enough to give you an objective idea of that motion. Now we will lose no time. We still have many very curious things to see here— Look at that enormous glacier. Might it not be taken for a pyramid a thousand times higher than those of Egypt?"

The glacier, whose peak was tinted with transparent rose-colour in the rays of the rising sun, looked as if it were built up of huge blocks of ice, like the fantastic palace erected by an Empress of Russia out of the ice-floes from the Neva. On going round this glacier, not without some difficulty, we found ourselves in front of a little door, leading to its interior. We went in.

An unexpected scene burst upon us; an immense hall lay before us, supported by colossal pillars of white marble. In the middle of it a Sphinx of amazing beauty, carved out of Egyptian granite, lay on a marble plinth. The statue was of a size transcending human fancy. The beautiful face suggested that of the finest known statue of Minerva. A smile of irony curled the corners of those classic lips. A magnificent and queenly bust was displayed in full beauty, and on either side the lion's paws lay in masterful strength on a huge serpent. On the plinth, in Greek capitals, was graven the motto which formerly decorated the pediment of the temple at Delphi :

ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΕΑΥΤΟΝ

Know thyself.

"Here, you see," said Prospero with a smile, "are the archives of human wisdom, and here is the statue of Philosophy. The head of Minerva, and the breasts of Venus on the body of a lioness. This is to signify that the loftiest thoughts which philosophers can derive from the inexhaustible bosom of nature, are ineffectual to preserve them from lapsing into animalism, when ruthless materialists put forth an audacious hand to lift the veil which shrouds mysteries that are inscrutable to human reason."

We noticed that every system devised to answer the Sphinx's two questions : "Whence art thou?" and "Whither goest thou?" had left their traces in this vast hall. The burnt treasures of the Alexandrian library, the lost books of Thales and of other sages of ancient Greece, unknown to us, the original manuscript of the Vedas, were all preserved here for future generations. None had found the answer to the Sphinx's riddle. I observed, lying by the side of Plato's "Republic," the manuscript of Bacon's "*Novum organum*," Kant's "Categorical Imperative," the works of Descartes



FRANCIS BACON
WHEN A BOY

From a coloured bust belonging to the Earl of Arundel.



and Spinoza, of Voltaire and Schopenhauer, and a mass of documents containing the forgotten speculations of the past.

"What," I asked Prospero, "is the meaning of the serpent which the Sphinx seems to have strangled?"

"Read," said he, "the scales of the serpent form letters."

And I read :

"*Eritis sicut Deus*—"

"It is the old Serpent of Paradise which Philosophy has killed. It lies there to remind us of the tortures which the fear of the Devil has brought upon humanity. The delusion is dispelled; future generations will be saved from burning witches and relapsing into those barbarities."

The walls of the hall were covered with inscriptions : hieroglyphics, Sanscrit, Greek, Latin—all the languages in which long-vanished nations have tried to utter their thoughts.

Pilate's question was there : "*Quid est veritas?*" and Montaigne's : "*Que sais-je?*"

"We have not time to study all these epitaphs of human wisdom or folly," said my guide. "We must not forget to look at the most curious thing of all—the skulls of those whose genius has been great enough to produce new ideas for the salvation of mankind. Nature, you see, who is so lavish in germs, is to the last degree niggardly of her noblest fruits. Since man first began to think, true genius has not clothed itself in human form on our planet more than twenty times at most."

To my great delight, I found among these skulls, forlorn of the really original brains they once had covered, those of Plato and of Lord Bacon.

"That was a genius!" cried Prospero, laying his hand on the cranium that once held Bacon's mind. "This brain measured and weighed more than double the average. To this genius men owe their deliverance from the schoolmen. His motto still is ours : '*Amicus Plato, amicus Aristoteles, sed magis amica Veritas!*' The insults heaped upon him after he became the victim of an infamous cabal, could not touch the sublime heights of that great intelligence. Spedding, in his 'Evenings with a

Reporter' refuted long since both Pope's absurd gossip, and Macaulay's partial and superficial essay. Newton and Harvey, Lyell and Darwin, Descartes and Cuvier, Dubois-Reymond and Virchow, all have followed the method of the English philosopher.

"Modern science, whether knowing it or not, is based on the pillars set up by that Hercules of intellect.

"The discernment of Francis Bacon has left us a saying which, like the words of his contemporary—'E pur si muove,' sounds as a prophetic utterance through all the ages :

" 'Knowledge is Power.' "

COUNT VITZTHUM.





THE HISTORY OF A DUEL (*)

IV

ON THE ROAD

When the footman came to announce that the carriage was waiting for them, Sempach was just finishing breakfast at a little table in the Cosmopolitan Club, with his seconds and the club doctor.

"No coffee," he was told, "it is enervating, and does one no good."

During the meal he had been taciturn and quite absorbed by his own reflections; he had resigned himself to pistols, as he would have done if the chosen weapon had been the marline-spike, or the assagay; the great thing was, to "get it over" as quickly as possible.

When the four men were ready to go, some of the other members of the club, who were few in number at that early hour, pressed round them to shake hands with Sempach and his friends, as the manager had hinted to them what was on foot. The waiters even, under the pomaded hair and white shirt fronts, seemed to have an expression of discreet devotion quite charming to behold. An old habitué went so far as to murmur in the Count de Brugnans' ear, "Good luck," and de Brugnans replied, "Thank you," in the most natural way possible.

(*) See *Art and Letters*, for April 1888, vol. II, p. 17.

At last they were off. They stopped at the corner of the Rue Royale at a gun maker's, to fetch the case of pistols which had been ordered. Then the horses' pace grew quicker, much to the satisfaction of Sempach, until they reached the hill of the Champs-Élysées.

It was a beautiful, fresh spring day. The March sun shone brilliantly, looking red and round through the immovable veil of white fog, which hung high up in the atmosphere. The buds were peeping, green and shining, at the tips of the branches of the chestnut trees. Under the trees some nursemaids were already perambulating to and fro in all the bravery of their white caps and many coloured ribbons, which floated like streamers from the masts of vessels at a regatta. Sempach's mournful eyes fell with a sort of unconscious envy upon the smart robes and long veils of the burdens which these women carried in their arms, with all the care proper to those who are entrusted with the guardianship of dawning life.

A tiresome, pitiless conversation was going on between de Brugnans and the doctor, a fat man whose cheeks seemed to ruminate beneath his spectacles. Each was recalling with gusto the events of former duels in which they had officiated for members of the club, each in his different capacity.

The Count was discussing the pros and cons of the duel at sight as compared with that in which both combatants stand firm. He cited cases of shots fired successively, with both parties approaching each other step by step. The doctor often contradicted him. It was very unpleasant, for the one discussed the possibility of missing fire, while the other entered into details as to the nature of wounds. It was a polite contest between the pistol and the trephine.

Sempach felt badly. He shrugged his broad shoulders and felt a peculiar tingling sensation at the roots of his hair and whiskers. The Captain who was sitting opposite him noticed this movement, and raised the glass of the window nearest him.

Sempach felt an impulse of sympathy towards this young man, to whom at least was due the merit of silence, and he looked gratefully into the beautiful blue eyes facing him, which were vaguely following the smoke of

an oriental scented cigarette. Following the reeking smoke in his turn, Sempach was not long before he imagined that the agonising qualms of sea sickness which he felt in his stomach were the result of this odour. He grew pale, and begged the Captain to throw away his cigarette, which he did at once.

Now he discovered that although the carriage was only going at a foot's pace, it was going much too fast, and the doctor, having told a story of a broken wheel, which under similar circumstances had been the means of preventing a duel, he was yearning feverishly for some lucky accident, when the Count, whose eyes were sparkling with joyous anticipation, carefully explained what means he would employ in such a case to prevent the duel being delayed for more than a few minutes. After that the only accident which Sempach desired was the sudden death of his diabolical second.

He, however, had begun to recount a series of eccentric duels, wishing no doubt to maintain his reputation as a jovial second who knew how to comfort his principal during the last hour by timely anecdotes and irresistible pleasantries.

"Just fancy!" he exclaimed at the end of one anecdote, "the pistols had been charged with champagne corks— Ha, ha, ha!"

The doctor laughed, Constantinowich smiled.

Sempach only succeeded in making a grimace. A picture rose before him of the scene in which he was so soon to take part. He pictured the pistol of his adversary aimed at him, there, only a little distance off—quite close—and he confessed to himself that it would seem quite as horrible, even if he was assured by oath or by actual experiment, that it was a ball made of cork which was about to be expelled from that little round, deep hole, which was of such tragic import.

Descending the Avenue de la Grande-Armée the horses had again put on speed. At the corner of the pavement they narrowly escaped running over a little boy, who was trying to save his top which had rolled into the gutter. "The damned little rascal!" growled the doctor.

Even the silent Constantinowich had been betrayed into an exclamation. From his seat Sempach had seen better than anybody the little boy, who

was a pretty, fair, cleanly dressed child, risk his life ; but a sort of legitimate egotism rivetted all his feelings of pity upon his own person.

The tone of good humour in which his companions were conversing saddened him more and more. In the presence of these persons so utterly indifferent to his fate, he conceived the lonely condition to which a life of pleasure had reduced him. He recalled the faces of his family, of those who loved him, away at Colmar ; good people who at that time suspected not what menaced their happiness, and for whom farewell letters were at that moment lying on his desk. Sempach had a sort of vision of his own death-bed, near which he saw his valet's tongue as he moistened the stamps of those letters before dispatching them. Gradually the tongue grew longer and black like that of a man who has been hanged, as if the kingdom of Death was approaching for him also.

Sempach recovered from this delirium, only to envy miserably the present position of his adversary, whom he pictured, petted and honoured, and faithfully attended by the watchful care of two true friends, Alphonse Ormel and Jacques Bernoir, with whom he had so often enjoyed a day's sport or a game at cards, taken all sorts of pleasures, and shared invitations. These two men would soon stand face to face with him, stern, hostile and implacable, and would adopt such measures as might appear best to them in order to facilitate his murder. Yes, it was true ! Nothing was left of the friendly and even affectionate relations which had existed between them ; and they who, in a few minutes, would act as his deadliest enemies were those who constituted his " friends," according to the fashion of Parisian friendships. Sempach at that moment perceived the deep abyss on the brink of which society laughs and plays.

Yes, and Préfanier ! was not Préfanier a *friend* in the true sense of the word, in the sense in which it can be translated into every human language ? In the inmost depths of his memory Sempach found tender reminiscences of his present adversary. He was obliged to restrain the tears which would rise to his eyes unbidden, except by the emotional state in which he was. He longed to be able to weep for the cruel fate which rendered it probable that before an hour had passed he might have killed Préfanier, or be killed by him.

The dialogue between the Count and the doctor still continued, and without any other interest entering into it but that of homicide. Sempach, in his new-found feeling of tenderness, discovered on the face of Constantinowich a downcast air, which he interpreted as a sign of commiseration.

"Captain," he said, to show himself at his ease, "I am now going to ask you for a cigarette. Just now, I don't know what was the matter with me——"

The Captain's eyes brightened. He took a metal case out of his pocket with *empressement* and offered cigarettes all round. What had been the cause of his apparent sadness, the fate of Sempach, or not being able to smoke? Or was it one of those reveries into which one falls, and from which one cannot recover one's self until addressed by some one if only to ask for a cigarette or enquire the time.

After the Pont de Neuilly the carriage again reduced its speed to a foot's pace.

Sempach had closed his eyes; but before them floated the image of Préfanier as if quite at home, smiling, merry and friendly. In vain he tried to call it up in a hostile aspect. It was always Préfanier before the quarrel. Oh! if he would only be well advised enough presently to offer some excuse, any excuse, however trifling, only a word of apology! One little word! How pleased Sempach would be, by what generous apologies he would reply to it! But why had they insisted on such a formality? Was it because the offence had been public? Was it, perhaps, for the satisfaction of unknown persons who had been present?

"Why," Sempach said to himself, "if he had given me a box on the ears when we were alone together in his room or mine, should I have had recourse to arms?" "Yes, certainly," one inward voice replied, while another dictated to him the very dignified letter which he might have written. "You will understand, sir"—No. "After what has passed, sir"—No, that was not what he would have said if he had been able to take the time to reflect—"My dear friend, I think that during an access of madness——" Yes, that was right, but why had he not done it? What would happen now if he were to kill his friend, and what would become of his family in which he had been treated as another son? Préfanier's father, his mother, and

his sister? Oh! he would rather be the victim himself! But to be killed, to become nothing but a thing without movement— quite cold— Oh! God! what a condition! And all for what? For whom? Then the faint outline of the impertinent little face of Madame Ormel, as though far distant, passed and re-passed before the eyes of the young man, beneath his closed lids, through which a ray of light shone with a rosy reflection as they turned a corner.

The landau entered another road to the left of the pedestal where the statue of Napoléon the First had formerly stood, and there they passed another landau drawn by two dapple-grey horses which seemed to be quite blown. Sempach, who had opened his eyes, saw confusedly the arms and hats of his companions waving, as they saluted the enemy while passing.

"I was asleep," he stammered, "was that he?"

"Yes," cried the Count, delighted, "there they are," and he leant out of the window. "Bravo! they are just behind us. We shall be quite punctual, there need be no delay."

And with his hand he addressed to the other party a series of polite little gestures which said, "Good day, good day till presently! Au revoir!"

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The occupants of the second carriage were morose enough.

Préfanier was seated at the back, facing Bernoir, and at his side sat the surgeon, whose one anxiety was to know whether he could be back in Paris at three o'clock. On his knees lay the black morocco case containing his instruments. On Bernoir's knees was the larger and broader box containing the pistols.

Sempach's evident dejection deeply troubled his adversary who now regretted his hasty action and its odious consequences.

He almost envied the habits of those wretched creatures whose hovels he saw on either side of the road, beggars, rag-pickers and scavengers, the basis of all whose social relations is that an exchange of blows leaves them as good friends as ever.

Then glancing at Ormel brought the image of his wife to his mind. He

felt a warmth about his heart and a fleeting sensation of well-being, at the thought of standing again safe and sound, and above all victorious, before Mercedes. He set aside the idea of the fate which in that case would be reserved for Sempach, he refused to picture it, and thought only of himself, seeing the end of the duel only in so far as it concerned his own personality.

At this point one detail in the preliminaries troubled him for the first time.

"Two balls are to be exchanged," he said, "that means, does it not, that each of us is to fire one only?"

"Certainly," replied the two seconds, with authority, "that is the ordinary method of procedure."

Then in order to show that he had after all not said a foolish thing, he made the following remark for which he was soon sorry :

"It seems, then, that it would be better to specify that *one* ball is to be exchanged,—one against one,—if not the point is not clear. For example, if one speaks of exchanging two francs it means getting forty sous for a two-franc piece and not exchanging one franc for twenty sous."

Alphonse and Jacques had listened attentively, and now seemed perplexed.

"Definitely then," continued Préfanier, "you consider that there is no doubt.—Ping, Ping, and that is all."

"At least," said Alphonse, with a little hesitation, "that is what we understood."

Bernoir turned interrogatively towards the surgeon who denied any knowledge of the matter.

"But," insisted Préfanier, growing suddenly more alarmed, "do you know what the others understood by it?"

"Why, no!"

"In any case, if there should be a misunderstanding, you will interpose and forbid the pistols to be re-loaded? Eh?"

The seconds quite disconcerted hesitated to make any promise, but at last they were obliged to do so in order to calm their principal. Nevertheless an interchange of glances said: "Well, we shall see,—we will do the best we can,—but we are not going to make fools of ourselves."

"The road now was indefinitely prolonged between two slopes, broken here and there with dusty tufts of grasses blown hither and thither by the wind. Every now and then they passed the cart of some countryman who, with his tongue in his cheek, and a wink of his eye, addressed to the Parisian coachman, showed himself perfectly aware of the destination of the two carriages, with their two stiff groups of four correctly dressed gentlemen. But not one of them turned round, which they would certainly have done had they met but an army service waggon. Martial enterprises on the part of civilians, do not interest these men, who are obliged to yield to a necessary evil and furnish to the army themselves and the flesh of their flesh.

A masterless dog insisted on followed Préfanier's carriage, barking with might and main; the coachman tried to drive him off with his whip, but Préfanier, annoyed at this, called to him rudely: "Let the dog alone, I tell you, and keep the whip for your own beasts!"

So he thought it wrong to torment a dog, but not to beat a pair of horses. Beneath the mechanical action of his senses, the agonising thought of the duel came and went like a steam hammer, grazing his skull and ready to crush it.

As they drew near their destination, moreover, Bernoir's anxiety grew still greater, for he feared to have perhaps to fight in the place of Préfanier. Besides the night before he had read in a manual on the duel the complicated phrase: "If one of the parties has fired at the third signal, and the other still continues to take aim, the seconds are obliged to rush in AT THEIR OWN RISK AND PERIL, between the adversaries, and to force them to desist." At this prospect Bernoir's thin body shivered visibly.

Ormel was a prey to an anxiety of a very different kind, but of a very lively nature. Several times he leant out of the window and his eyes eagerly explored the horizon in the direction of Paris.

"What's the matter?" asked Préfanier in whom his excited state provoked all sorts of uncomfortable ideas.

"Nothing, nothing at all."

The truth was, however, that the engineer was afraid of seeing suddenly in the distance a little *coupé* bringing in it a little woman whose presence

would then be decidedly inconvenient, for during the preceding evening Madame Ormel, who was on the tiptoe of curiosity, had succeeded in quite overcoming the discretion of her husband, and in making him divulge every detail of the secret.

Ormel had got thoroughly mixed up in his account, contradicting himself and attributing to Préfanier the rôle which he had at first insisted belonged to Bernoir.

His vanity had caused him to pretend to conceal a knowledge as to the motives of the encounter, and the name of the lady; in short he surrounded the affair with such mystery that Mercedes in despair at finding any other explanation cried: "You are not telling the truth, it is you who are going to fight." "Little silly, you have only to come and see," he rejoined, quite delighted and flattered at this supposition. Now he was reflecting that he had been very much in the wrong thus to confess the place of meeting; but when one's wife is as charming as Madame Ormel—

So all the time he was dreading the apparition of a little black speck in the distance behind them.

When they reached the bank of the Seine, after passing the Bois du Vésinet, Préfanier suddenly felt in his pocket and took out two letters the superscriptions of which he examined before handing one to the engineer who read—"For my father."

Alphonse, of course, understood what this meant, but out of delicacy he looked up questioningly.

"It is a mission which I entrust to you in case of accident."

"Oh! that is all nonsense," said Ormel, who was nevertheless touched by the confidence. The other letter, the envelope of which was neither closed nor addressed he handed to Bernoir, who in his turn pretended astonishment; then leaning towards Bernoir he whispered in his ear:

"You will open my pocket book, take from it a note for a thousand francs, and carry it to Edwige with this——"

After which Préfanier with a faint smile apologised to his other friend for having whispered.

"You are a steady married man, and I didn't want to implicate you in my bachelor affairs."

He had yielded to a vague sentiment of delicacy towards Madame Ormel, in not pronouncing before her husband, who to a certain extent was her representative, the name of a certain acquaintance of his, who would certainly not be received in that lady's drawing-room.

"All right, old fellow!" Bernoir murmured, seizing Préfanier's hands and shaking them heartily, only leaving them to rub his red eyelids which were moist with emotion.

V

ON THE GROUND

The landaus stopped at a point, the value of which de Brugnans had instantly discovered with his practised eye of a commander-in-chief of private battles.

Each party descended lightly and all bowed. Sempach and Préfanier each with his back towards his own carriage avoided looking at each other, and fixed their eyes obstinately on the opposite bank of the river where a group of boatmen were singing in unison a low, sad, monotonous ditty, while engaged in towing a barge.

The doctors entered into conversation, and after the first interchange of civilities the surgeon spoke of his desire to be at home by three o'clock. The club doctor said he need not have any anxiety on that point, and added: "Why, you have brought your case of instruments—— I never bring anything——" And he put his hands into his pockets to show how free this precaution left him as to his movements. After the four seconds had exchanged civilities the Count de Brugnans took off his light overcoat, and in spite of the dampness of the air by the river the others felt obliged to follow his example. Then the old man marched at their head as if he had been followed by a staff and set out to find a suitable piece of ground.

On the field of battle he was quite at home, calm, strong, and master of all topographical difficulties. "Here," he said, "the ground is not level, there, there are bushes which by forming a background would expose one of the combatants, while the other would have the sun in his eyes."

He was listened to with awe and admiration.

At last he exclaimed with as much pleasure as if they had been looking for a place to lay the dinner at a picnic :

"Here's the place! An excellent place! A capital place!"

"Excellent," said Préfanier's seconds, "all that can be desired!" And these words of congratulation were wafted by the breeze to the two principals who were now working off their excitement by ramping up and down.

"We must see, however," said the Count de Brugnans, "which way the wind blows."

Alphonse and Jacques indicated two opposite directions so as to run the chance of one of them being right. The Captain indicated a third cardinal point, but the old expert gravely moistened his finger in his mouth to render it more sensitive to a current of air and after waving it for a moment solemnly declared :

"It blows from the north!" thus putting all on an equal footing by choosing a quarter which neither had indicated.

"We must now count the paces," continued the Count, "twenty-five, was it not?"

De Brugnans graciously turned to Bernoir, with the air of a general covered with laurels, who gives to a young aide-de-camp the opportunity of distinguishing himself :

"M. Bernoir, will you have the goodness to attend to this little matter?"

Bernoir grew crimson, an inward voice warned him not to put himself forward or assume any responsibility.

Alphonse came to his assistance with an impulse of humanity, and proposed that the Captain should undertake this, as his longer legs would render the paces larger.

Constantinowich was flattered by this compliment, and used his best endeavours to tread the paces gracefully.

In order to maintain his dignity he showed no apparent effort, and affected to make very moderate and straight strides, chiefly occupying himself with the carriage of his figure, and the play of his limbs. His only desire was to walk naturally, like a man who is going to pay a visit and is in no hurry.

The space covered was therefore very small, and when on the point of

fixing it by a line at each end, Ormel was about to make the remark, but the face of the brave Captain expressed such lively satisfaction, that it would have been cruel to have raised a question as to his method of procedure.

The choice of arms and positions was then decided by lot, and although the results of this could not be of the slightest importance, the drawing was carried on with grave solemnity, the seconds pluming themselves with the thought that this was a little duel between themselves of their luck in games of chance.

Alphonse threw a louis in the air.

"Tails!" cried de Brugnans.

It was heads.

The Count picked up the coin and threw it in his turn.

"Heads!" cried Ormel.

It was tails.

Bernoir ran to fetch Préfanier's pistol case, and quite out of breath and with the look of one who does not wish to be outstripped in bringing good news, he cried :

"We have won the choice of arms."

Préfanier raised his head. His face was as pale as wax.

Meanwhile the Count said to Sempach :

"You have the choice of position. I am always in luck for that; I always say 'Tails,' it's a good system."

"Is that any use?" his principal said, simply.

The Count de Brugnans then loaded the pistols with the greatest possible care.

"If the hand is heavy," he explained, "the ball may be dented in inserting it, which would spoil the accuracy of the flight of the projectile."

And the little blows of the mallet which inserted the balls resounded toc! toc! in the bursting hearts of the combatants.

While putting in the wadding the old man went on :

"This is the most delicate part of the operation. If I adjusted the cap wrong there would only be a flash in the pan, and you know that counts as a shot— There, it is done now. If you are quite ready,



gentlemen, we will begin. It is quite right and proper that neither party should have anything in his pockets, and our duty requires us to make a personal inspection."

Ormel was obliged to go to Sempach, who, without saying a word, allowed him to feel all over his chest with his fingers which trembled with a kind of shame, and his eyes were lowered while he went through this odious business of an exciseman, for whom any chance of safety as regarded a human life was contraband.

The Count, on the contrary, while inspecting Préfanier who had just emptied his pockets on to the ground, acted deliberately and with the conscious pride of fulfilling a duty. He felt several times over the place where a pocket-book may save the lungs, and where a watch, a purse, or a bunch of keys may prevent the perforation of the intestines. Finding that nothing was there to prevent the adversary of his principal being wounded he retired perfectly satisfied.

After this light but diabolical series of touches, shivers kept running up the skin of Sempach and Préfanier.

Meanwhile, on the other bank of the Seine, a laundress had begun to beat out her linen, and the vigorous strokes of her stick, repeated and magnified by the echoes, seemed to renew in colossal proportions the *toc! toc!* of the pistols as they were being loaded.

Nearer at hand they could hear the loud voices of the coachmen, who were waiting in no great hurry, but standing on their seats so as to be able to see better, and every now and then the horses smelling the water near gave a plaintive and thirsty neigh.

At last the combatants were brought into position. The Count de Brugnans with that active zeal which is so becoming in men of his age, raised the collar of his principal's black coat to hide the white linen of his shirt which would have attracted his opponent's aim. He put the tall hat straight on his head, as it had previously cast too much shade over his eyes. Then he stood Sempach, whose docility was almost painful, well in profile, making him turn in his toes so that the tension of the knees, which thus also turned inwards, should throw out the top of the femur, so as to protect the soft parts of the lower abdomen.

Having done this he stepped back a few paces to admire his work, like an art amateur who endeavours to see a picture from the most favourable point of view, and he contemplated the pose of this miserable figure with the legitimate satisfaction of one who is an artist in his special vocation.

Alphonse and Jacques had stood motionless during these operations, their vanity preventing them from copying the actions of the master, and aping the efforts of his genius. They preferred to affect to hold different opinions, rather than to betray their ignorance by a servile and tardy imitation.

"You are all right as you are!" they said to their friend.

Préfanier stood nervously in a particularly awkward attitude, and thanked them by a contraction of the facial muscles which was neither a smile nor a grimace, but an expression of utter wretchedness.

The butt-end of a pistol was presented to each of the combatants.

"Cock your weapon," said de Brugnans to Sempach.

This time Alphonse and Jacques did not yield to a false sense of shame.

"Cock your weapon," they repeated.

Then arose a new cause for delay. The old man to whom a useful recommendation occurred, approached Sempach, looking at him most benignantly, and whispered in a low voice :

"At the word 'two,' fire at the level of his waistband——"

Then satisfied at the fulfilment of this last duty, having done all the good permitted to one of his nature and education, he once more assumed an expression of official sternness :

"Will the seconds kindly retire?" he cried, while he and the Captain stepped back a few paces.

On this Ormel and Bernoir precipitately quitted their friend, with that absence of remorse and feeling that "self-preservation is the first law of nature," which, from time immemorial, has caused the desertion of those infected by pestilence.

"Oh! it is not necessary to go so far," observed de Brugnans with a superior smile.

A little humiliated by this Alphonse came a few steps nearer; but Jacques obstinately remained where he was, several yards in the rear.

"Are you ready?" demanded the commander-in-chief.

Two feeble but clear "yeses" resounded in the silence that followed.

At this moment the reasoning faculty seemed suddenly abolished both in Préfanier and in Sempach; at least no one would have attributed to them the power of reasoning any more than to the lower animals. Their eyes, nostrils, and jaws seemed to change their human expression, only showing the dominant instinct of life which is common both to man and brutes.

A sort of mask seemed to have fallen over their faces, in which the passion of living seemed to have banished every variation of form and expression.

The laundress on the opposite bank had desisted from her work, and was leaning against a tree watching the proceedings. One of the pairs of horses tried to start off, and the coachmen seemed having a swearing match.

The old man's voice was raised :

"Fire!"

Less than half a minute's pause ensued.

Bernoir covered his eyes with one hand. Now that he was freed from all personal fear by the very proper conduct of Préfanier, he began to feel a tender gratitude, an overwhelming pity for his friend.

Ormel's heart likewise seemed struggling under an enormous weight. He also felt unable to bear the sight of his friend's danger; but it is a law of man's nature to escape from suffering whenever he can find the least loophole, and so he suddenly threw his whole mental being into a train of consoling reflections. Even if the very worst were to happen, he saw a vision of a reward proportionate to the injury, the noise it would make in the press, the public expressions of feeling— Who knows? Even, perhaps, the trial would come off at the police court, nay, before the Court of Assizes where he had a right to take his place in the dock in the pride of conscious innocence— "Your name and profession?" "Alphonse Ormel, civil engineer—" These thoughts coursed through his

brain like the shadows in the ballad of the Dance of Death—— He saw his portrait in the police newspapers; and every one saying, "Oh, yes! it is Alphonse Ormel. Have you seen him?"

Then, in spite of himself, he almost wished a tragic *dénouement* to the duel. A feeling of shame quickly followed; but he banished it, and calmed the last stirrings of his conscience by forcing himself to hope that Sempach would be the victim, which would be satisfactory in every way; for Sempach was only a casual acquaintance, with whom one shook hands at meeting—— And the engineer fixed his eyes on him, his pupils dilating with the impatient horror of seeing him fall——

The Count de Brugnans had evidently no other thought than to count slowly, carefully, and precisely up to three.

"One!" he cried, clapping his hands together.

A double detonation shook the air and rolled itself out along the river.

The horses reared, but the two men stood perfectly still, holding the pistols in their outstretched hands. Without apparent premeditation, but under the impulse of an identical mental state, each had fired at a passing cloud, and now their moistened eyes and softened expressions seemed only to wait for a pretext for them to fall into each other's arms, and break into exclamations of apology and affection.

But the leader of the seconds felt very differently to the principals on this point and was very far from acknowledging himself satisfied.

Over the face of the old Count came an expression of unbending severity.

"What means this farce?" he grumbled.

The Captain, beyond himself, was on the point of speaking.

Alphonse pretended to think it was an accident.

Jacques began to fear an unpleasant complication.

The doctor and the surgeon shrugged their shoulders like men unaccustomed to a harmless ending such as this.

The coachmen turned their backs and began to prepare for the return journey.

"Naturally, it must all be done over again," murmured the Count

at last, "these gentlemen cannot think they have thus settled their quarrel. Such a blunder takes me quite by surprise; I hardly know what ought to be done— either as regards them or ourselves."

All at once a thought struck the engineer.

"There is no necessity even to obtain the consent of our principals," he said; then, turning to Bernoir, he added: "Don't you remember the question which Préfanier raised in the carriage while we were driving here, about the two balls?"

And he began to explain the point of logic of which he would never have thought had it not been raised by his unfortunately far too clever friend. But this little bit of treason was committed in such good faith, and with so evident a desire to please all parties, that it was quite pardonable.

"That is very ingenious," remarked the Count, who, owing to this unprecedented occurrence, was suffering one of the most painful experiences he had ever had in his career as second.

"Come, gentlemen, to work— let us give these madcaps a lesson, if you please— Now then, Monsieur Bernoir?"

At the beginning of this conversation, Bernoir's furtive eyes wandering about had fallen upon his friend Préfanier's pocket-book which had been thrown down on the grass by its owner when he had been told to empty his pockets. It was a pretty little case made of embroidered satin, the initials of which, being worked in gold thread, shone in the sunbeams.

Suddenly Jacques remembered the promise he had made to take from it the thousand franc note for Edwige, if Préfanier were killed. But that last wish had been whispered softly into his ear— How was it to be done when his only authority for the act was the word of one whose mouth was closed in death? What! was he to appear to throw himself on the property of the body which was still warm, and thus to lay himself open to the foulest suspicion? By Jove! why, it was horrible, dishonourable! What a fool he was not to have thought of it before. It would have been so easy to have said: "Give me the thousand francs?" Yet the last wishes of a friend are sacred! By George! what was he to

do! There was no alternative, but to search among the property of the dead before the eyes of all present with his trembling fingers, or to make a sacrifice to pride out of his own pocket. No, thanks!— A thousand francs!

At this thought a sudden wave of heat brought the perspiration to the brow of the little second. The risk which his pocket had run, owing to his want of reflection, nearly overcame him.

And these madmen wanted to renew that risk! He was only just in time to interpose, and a great air of resolution seemed to pervade his being, as he replied to the question which the Count had addressed to him :

"I most strongly oppose the continuance of the duel."

De Brugnans and Constantinowich positively gave a jump of astonishment, and the former asked with a fierce look of offended dignity :

"Monsieur Ormel, is it possible that you can approve of the serious words which have just been uttered?"

"No, certainly not! On the contrary."

But at that moment Alphonse's attention was called to a little black speck on the horizon, which rapidly increased in size and assumed for him the form of a carriage, and that carriage, the possible coming of which he had forgotten, his wife's—

Already the sound of wheels could be heard on the gravel. Here was a pretty mess to be in.

"Oh!" cried he, "go to the devil! I wash my hands of the whole thing."

"Pardon me," exclaimed the old man, "neither the Captain nor I will allow ourselves to be treated with such scant courtesy. We——"

But at that moment he, in his turn, was interrupted by an apparition at the top of a bank, the shadow of which fell on the road, the shadow of a police official, who with his hand to his hat was inspecting the group of disturbers of the peace in no friendly way.

Now, the old gentleman had acquired a certain repugnance for everything which was associated in his mind either materially or morally with the idea of law. This state of mind, founded on past experience,

dated from a time when he was neither called Brugnans nor Lecomte.

"Oh!" he said, "if that fellow up there is going to interfere, I shall throw up the whole thing."

"Very well," said Alphonse, opening his pocket-book, "let us settle up this document and have done."

"It will be signed to-night in Paris."

"But will it not be better to send it in time for the evening papers?"

"All right! Give me your pencil."

The Count then drew up a document to the effect that, "two balls having been exchanged in accordance with the above conditions, without any result, the undersigned seconds had declared the claims of honour to be satisfied."

By way of correction, Alphonse proposed that, instead of "undersigned seconds," they should say: "the Count de Brugnans and Captain Constantinowich on the one side, MM. Alphonse Ormel and Jacques Bernoir on the other." So that in this way the names of the combatants were not mentioned, but those of the seconds appeared twice, counting the signatures.

During this time the whilom adversaries seemed drawn to each other by the bonds of affection, but as yet dared not look each other in the face. It was Jacques who intervened, begging and urging them, though without any necessity of employing force.

"My poor dear fellow! My poor dear fellow!" the two friends exclaimed with one accord—embracing each other,—and in voices choked with sobs.

"Let us go!" said the Count to the Captain.

"I should like to go, too," grumbled Préfanier's surgeon.

"Very well, come with us; these gentlemen will bring back Monsieur de Sempach, so as to ratify the peace."

Ormel gave a great sigh of relief, being freed from possible remonstrances by the departure of the first carriageful. He ran forward to meet Madame Ormel's coupé which had now drawn near and was stopping a little distance off.

He composed his face to that expression of approval which all men end by adopting to show to their wives even if, at that very moment, they inwardly feel the strongest disapprobation; and it is the only way to escape the wrath of one's wife, which is sure to follow if one tries to prove that she is in the wrong.

"It has all ended happily," he cried, as soon as Mercedes had lowered the window of her carriage, and begun to look about her—"Peace has just been concluded between Sempach and Préfanier," and he added in her ear, in an affectionately confidential tone: "You had little woman, you see it was they all the time, though you wouldn't believe it."

His wife, however, was not looking at him, but gazing far off over his tall hat with a look of grave enquiry towards the group formed by Bernoir and the duelists, who had been standing in a state of stupefaction, hand in hand, and now, interrupting the flow of their affectionate greetings, were beginning partially to regain the use of their senses.

They did not know as yet what to say or to do. Ought they to stay where they were, or to go and greet Madame Ormel?

Alphonse, at the door of the *coupé*, spoke volubly and with many gestures.

"Would you like to get out—here is the statement of the affair—look—listen, shall I read it to you? Tell me, dear, we shall all go back together, shan't we?"

Mercedes never uttered a word. She was looking at the surface of the surrounding ground, whence the smoke from the pistols had already vanished like the phantasies which had filled her brain during her long, sad, lonely drive.

"I heard pistol shots," she said at last, in a rather hoarse voice.

Then she got out of the carriage.

She wore a striped gown, and a hat made of maroon velvet like her skirt, and trimmed with white plumes, and a cut-away coat with a high waistcoat front, the high stiff collar of which gave a wilful, haughty air to the upright carriage of her little head.

Sempach and Préfanier, followed by Bernoir, hastened to meet her.

"Just fancy," cried Alphonse as they approached, "my little wife had



made up her mind that it was I who was going to fight—— Now, Mercedes, you can treat them to a little moral lesson."

"You bad boys," she said, holding out a hand to each of them with the same coquettish gesture.

Her ordinary spirits and animation were gradually re-asserting themselves. She asked to be led over the ground and shewn the spot where Sempach and Préfanier had stood.

"Then, this is where you were?" she said, looking for footprints on the damp earth; and having stooped so as to see better, with her hands in her coat pockets, and her elbows stuck out, the sun as she stood, threw a comical shadow of her on the grass, her *en-tout-cas* which she held under one arm pressed against her side, being lengthened out in the shadow like the wing of a sphinx.

"Well, let's be off now," said Ormel at last. Since de Brugnans had left, he had felt himself to be called to the command of the party.

It was arranged for all to return in the landau. Bernoir somehow felt himself *de trop* among the others. The unconscious rôle which he had played in the opinion of Madame Ormel, had only lasted during that breakfast. Thus it is that things are sometimes felt to have passed away for ever, even when they have hardly begun.

"I will ride on the box," he said with an appearance of ill-humour, which was not calculated to make the others try to dissuade him from it. Préfanier sat opposite Madame Ormel and Sempach next to him, each having a pistol case on his knees.

Mercedes insisted on handling the pistols which had been used; she held them to her nostrils and sniffed the powder with a gesture of disgust.

"Oh! how horrid it smells," she exclaimed, "really how can any one?——" But she was not able to explain her meaning, and no one could quite feel sure what the end of that phrase might possibly have signified.

Ormel was particularly *empresé* in his behaviour towards Sempach, and devoted himself to him especially, as though anxious to demonstrate that it is possible to play a part in proceedings calculated to cost a man his life,

without that being any reason for discontinuing friendly relations with the person in question.

"Don't you think my wife is too given to curiosity?" he said, "she absolutely forced me to let her into the secret of your meeting!"

Sempach, who did not know exactly how much Préfanier had confided to the husband, as to the origin of the quarrel, felt confused and dropped his eyes.

Immediately on this Madame Ormel, whose curiosity like that of all her sex, seemed guided by an unnaturally sharp instinct, and who was more anxious to know about the woman than about the man, said rather abruptly :

"The—— person—— about whom you quarrelled—— does she know about the duel?"

"No, Madame," replied Préfanier, firmly, "she does not even suspect herself to be the cause."

The emphatic tone of this utterance made Mercedes thoughtful. After a moment or two she gave a little laugh and said lightly : "At any rate, I hope she is worth the trouble you have been put to."

"Well, well, well," interrupted her husband, "it is always the same."

She gave him a glance of rebuke, with an expression as if she were shocked at his interference; her lips were drawn back with something of a snarl and showing the corner of her mouth from which the tooth was missing.

Sempach and Préfanier, considerably troubled and put out of countenance by her skilful cross-questioning, gave a meaning look at each other : "Yes, she is worth it."

Mercedes devoted herself almost affectionately first to one, and then to the other of the two young men; but Préfanier, anxious to concentrate her attention on himself, said, half-jokingly, half-sadly, but quite boldly :

"Now, to be candid, Madame, what should you say that she would think of us, if she learned the truth, and saw us both return safe and sound? Don't you think she would consider us perfectly ridiculous?"

Madame Ormel's eyes were glancing in the direction of Sempach, but at the sound of these words, which circumvented her, she turned her black

pupils towards Préfanier at first shyly, but then dilating them as they met his with the impudent expression of a town sparrow.

"Confess, Madame," said Sempach in his turn, "you would never think seriously of us any more——"

"I?" she said, slightly confused, "I don't know. What do you mean?—— I hardly understand you?" And she gave the two rivals a warm, bright, and very impartial glance of the friendliest admiration.

"They're a pretty pair of ninnies, aren't they Mercedes?" cried Ormel.

*
* *

The police official still stood motionless, with his hand to his cap, on his point of vantage, overlooking the battle field, and watched the second landau disappear in the distance, with an expression of extreme disappointment and disgust on his wooden countenance.

PAUL HERVIEU.





RACHEL AT THREE PERIODS

A VETERAN'S RECOLLECTIONS



met Rachel only thrice outside the walls of the theatre where I applauded her in all her characters; but, by a singular chance, those three meetings coincided with what may be termed the spring, summer, and winter of her short and brilliant career: the glorious *début* in all its incomparable splendour; the apogee, with the sad, vague presentiment that thenceforward she must perforce decline; and the fatal hour of decadence or of expiation—Marengo, Jena, Waterloo;—I might, alas! even add St. Helena, for I have never been to Cannes without going up to Cannet to visit that strange Villa-Sardou, which resembled a tomb before becoming a coffin.

In 1838, the sum of my literary labours amounted to a score of articles, published in "*Le Rénovateur*," in "*L'Écho de la Jeune France*," and

above all, in "*La Quotidienne*," a journal of the old school, patronized by the Duc de Noailles, the Duc de Fitz-James, the Marquis de Brézé, M. Berryer, M. Hennequin, and most of the legitimist notabilities. This poor *Quotidienne*, which was so much sneered at under the Restoration, had, however, as director a man of much ability, M. Michaud. The dramatic *feuilleton* was written by M. Merle, presumptive husband of Madame Dorval, also very clever, very amusing, and possessing a fund of anecdote, but a being whose money may be said to have always "burned in his pocket."

On the 10th of September 1838,—it was one of those late warm days that carry on the summer to the very threshold of autumn,—I was walking along the Rue Richelieu with my friend Gaston de R., like myself a lover of *Hernani*, and like myself again (without the early ardour of enthusiasm) still faithful to Romanticism.

Passing the Théâtre-Français, I glanced mechanically at the bill, whereon *Andromaque* was announced for that evening. "Fancy," I said to Gaston, "a tragedy by Racine in the month of September and in weather like this! There won't be 300 francs in the house."

"No," he replied gravely, "fifty crowns."

On the boulevard, at the corner where the Café Cardinal stands, we came across Merle.

Said he to us: "You don't know? A phenomenon! A prodigy! There is at the Théâtre-Français a *tragédienne* of eighteen, who is going to draw crowds to see the masterpieces of Corneille and Racine! She is a Jewess; her name is Rachel Félix. At the Théâtre Castellane and the Gymnase she was unnoticed; but this time!— You will not doubt what I say, because this success is a fatal thing for my poor wife. The other evening the receipts were 500 francs. To-night they will be 2000 and next week 5000."

Dear old Merle, thanks to his former occupation of theatrical manager, had a way of reckoning up successes by the receipts.

At night I hurried to the Théâtre-Français. The *débutante* played Hermione before a nearly full house. My admiration was divided between the actress, who was wonderful, and the poet, to whom I made up some

heavy arrears of enthusiasm, together with a touch of repentance. "Is it possible," I asked myself, "that we can have sacrificed such pure poetry, such delicate and truthful sentiment, such a delightful style, to the heavy artillery of *Lucrèce Borgia* and *La Tour de Nesle*?" My repentance made me unjust. I flew from one extreme to the other. I forgot that at the time when Alexandre Dumas and Victor Hugo took possession of the contemporary stage, Corneille and Racine were alike inadequately interpreted and indifferently succeeded.

The following winter I had the great honour of being invited, with all the editorial staff of *La Quotidienne*, to a party at the house of the Duc de Noailles, where Mademoiselle Rachel, who had become all the rage, was to be heard in private.

Here a short explanation is necessary, for the benefit of such of my young readers as have witnessed the glorification and apotheosis of Victor Hugo. In 1838, with a few rare exceptions, the distinguished men of learning, the Academies, the *salons* of the *rive gauche*, the Faubourg Saint-Germain, political men, such as MM. Pasquier, Molé, Duchâtel and Royer-Collard, had not countenanced, above all at the theatre, the revolution in favour of Romanticism. They looked upon it as a crisis, an attack of burning fever. The extraordinary success of Mademoiselle Rachel had upon them the effect of a revenge and a rescue.

But once on the way they did not know how to stop themselves. They confounded the interpreter with the classical repertory. Because Rachel could render masterpieces, if not of purity, at least of idealised passion, it pleased them, during this species of honey-moon, to make out of this Jewish child of Bohemia an inspired maiden, a kind of dramatic Joan of Arc,—what M. Legouvé, twenty years later, thought fit to call a "Madonna of Art."

Actors and actresses, in 1838, were still kept at a distance, especially in the old-fashioned houses of the *noble faubourg*. Well, during this brief period, followed by tragi-comic deceptions that might easily have been foreseen, Rachel was welcomed like one of the family, and treated on a footing of perfect equality; whereby she was at once greatly astonished, extremely proud, very much embarrassed, and somewhat wearied. From

the double point of view here set forth, this maidenly *soirée* was characteristic.

She came in at about ten o'clock, accompanied by Samson,—not the executioner, but the excellent comedian whom she called her master, and who would have much wished, I believe, to call her his mistress.—I heard some of the refractory ones, Marquises, or Viscounts, whisper around me : “Come, come, she has tact! She didn't bring her mother with her!”

Her demeanour, her style, were irreproachably correct. She wore a simple high-necked dress, and her only jewel was a bracelet, a present from the Duc and Duchesse. I observed her closely. As the compliments and the flattery gathered respectfulness I felt that she had difficulty in concealing a secret uneasiness. At this moment, I noticed that Samson was alone in a corner of the salon. Very *spirituel* and precisely on that account free from professional presumption and foolishness, he felt rather out of his element in the midst of all these descendants of the Crusaders. I approached him, and, ere long, reminiscences of the Odéon, of the Rue de Vaugirard, of his pretty comedy, *La Belle-Mère et le Gendre*, of the Grande Allée du Luxembourg,—where I had so often met him walking with his comrade Provost,—served as links to bring us together. Then, too, a common sentiment drew us towards the idol of the day who appeared before us surrounded, as it were, with a chaste aureola, by a group of young girls bearing, or destined to bear, the greatest names in France.

“I am not quite easy in my mind,” said the future Marquis de la Seiglière to me. “With the best of intentions these great lords and ladies are making too much fuss. It is not wanted at all. Rachel is of a very nervous temperament, a highly fanciful disposition. She is flattered and irritated both at once at the part she has to play and cannot sustain. Look out for the explosion! Look out for the crash!”

We were interrupted by the Duchesse, who in the most gracious terms asked for a little silence. She announced that Mademoiselle Rachel was about to give the great scene between Hermione and Oreste, and that the “cues” would be given by M. Charles Brifaut, member of the Académie

Française. Perfect stillness ensued, and Melpomene was about to recite the beautiful lines :

...“ Je veux savoir, seigneur, si vous m'aimez !
Je ne veux pas si loin porter de tels affronts—— ”

—when, lo! the door opened, and we beheld the Abbé Dupanloup enter the room. His age was then thirty-seven. The Archbishop of Paris had just appointed him Vicar-General. Till then he had only been Superior of the minor seminary and a teacher of the first order, but his influence was already considerable, for since 1824, his duties of instruction had brought him girls who had become wives and mothers. Previous to the Revolution of July, he had had time to be the confessor of the Duc de Bordeaux—then quite a child—and would to heaven the young penitent of 1829 had been more amenable to the wise counsels of the Bishop of forty-three years later! Queen Marie-Amélie had chosen him to direct the religious education of her daughters, and finally, what shed a new lustre on his growing fame was the fact that, some months before, he had contrived, at least in such fashion as to save appearances, to accomplish the conversion of the Prince de Talleyrand. Such a conscience as that, so excessively complicated, had too many twists and turns and secret receptacles to be easily penetrated. But the scandal was avoided : the Church declared itself satisfied, and everybody, from Louis-Philippe down to Monseigneur de Quélen, was thankful to the young priest, who seemed destined to a great future.

The Duchesse made Mademoiselle Rachel a sign which was understood. At once relinquishing the profane amours of Oreste and Hermione in favour of more Christian poetry, she selected for recitation some fragments of *Polyeucte*, commencing with the scene which Voltaire himself has characterised as sublime :

“ Sévère, connaissez Pauline tout entière ;
Mon Polyeucte touche à son heure dernière ;
Pour achever de vivre il n'a plus qu'un moment—— ”

Then came the prodigious thunderbolt.

“ Je vois, je sais, je crois, je suis désabusée !
De ce bienheureux sang tu me vois baptisée—— ”

The emotion of the distinguished audience was at its height, it changed to softest compassion when the great actress, passing from Corneille to Racine, from *Polyeucte* to *Esther*, sighed the delicious prayer :

"O mon souverain roi
Me voici donc tremblante et seule devant toi!—"

In these scenes each so different from the other, her accents were so true and penetrating, her expression was so pathetic, she exhibited so much art in showing herself by turns heroic, sublime, and touching, her tragic mask lent itself to such delicate *nuances* that the effect was irresistible.

The younger ladies wept; tears stood in beautiful eyes. Grave men made no effort to disguise how deeply they were moved. Rachel seemed under the influence of a supernatural inspiration. How could one have dreamed of separating from each other the dead poetry and the living—the text and the interpreter? "It is impossible that she does not think, that she does not feel, what she says so well!" Thus remarked the people about her. They surrounded her on all sides and overwhelmed her with enthusiastic praises. The Abbé Dupanloup went up to her, and, in a well-turned sentence, marked by a quasi-episcopal grace, told her—much more elegantly than I should be able to repeat it—that those admirable lines, delivered in so admirable a manner, became one more hymn to the glory of God.

Going out I descended the grand staircase behind Samson and his companion. I heard the latter mutter a few detached words which presaged no good.

I rejoined the two artists at the outer gate. It was raining in torrents, and Melpomene had as yet neither chariot nor coach. I offered my modest hackney carriage, which was graciously accepted. There I was witness of a scene that Corneille and Racine had not foreseen. Never had the loveliest medal, whether Greek, Roman, Hebrew or Christian so extraordinary a reverse to it.

"Ouf!" she exclaimed, putting down both windows in spite of the rain, "it was time! I am stifling! I feel suffocating. If that martyrdom had lasted five minutes longer I should have burst."

"Martyrdom, my dear child!" replied Samson in a paternal tone; "it seemed to me easier than that of Polyeucte."

"You know perfectly well what I mean, you sly old fox! The unbearable constraint! The annoyance of being mistaken for what I am not! To have forced on me a *rôle* which is neither in my repertory nor my line! Deuce take it, because I can play Esther and Pauline decently, there is no reason why all these affected creatures and little simpletons should award me a crown of orange blossoms and a maiden's good conduct prize! It makes me mad."

"Come, calm yourself. You will give this gentleman the notion of a Rachel unworthy the one of a few minutes ago."

"And what do I care? Not a rap. The gentleman is not a fool. He is a college friend of Alfred de Musset, my friend, the only man who understands me! If they drive me to extremes, do you know what I shall do?"

"What?"

"Show them that I am not the simple maiden they take me for and——"

"Come, come, my poor child, it is no longer yourself that is speaking; it is your nerves."

In truth her feelings were overstrung. After a nervous crisis, Rachel burst into tears. We arrived at her door and it was still raining.

"Fine rain beats down a strong wind," whispered the lively comedian.

* *

January 30th, 1848.

Nine years elapsed. They had wrought changes in the theatrical, social, physical, and moral condition of Mademoiselle Rachel upon which it is needless to insist. She was still all the fashion. Her provincial tours had been triumphant, notably at Marseilles, where, in 1843, I made myself the interpreter of southern enthusiasm. As to the misapprehension whereof she had complained nine years before, it was no longer possible; and in January, 1848, less than ever. For the performances of Madame de Girardin's tragedy, *Cléopâtre* had just been suspended.



On the evening of the above date there was a grand dinner given in the Rue Saint-Benoît at the house of M. Buloz, who combined—though not for very long—the functions of Director of the *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, and “Commissaire Royal” of the Théâtre-Français. I recollect they gave him as a new year’s gift a carpet and a lustre. A lustre! The guests would have alone sufficed to supply the necessary luminary agency: Eugène Delacroix, Meyerbeer, Alfred de Musset, Jules Janin, J. J. Ampère, Mérimée, Comte Alexis de Saint-Priest, the forthcoming academician, M. Baude, M. Vitet, and—Mademoiselle Rachel. I say nothing of the most obscure, the most humble of the guests, who then wrote the literary and dramatic criticisms in the *Revue*, and whose sole superiority to all these “immortals” is that he is still left amongst mortals.

I had been, if not the college companion of Alfred de Musset,—he was a student at the “Lycée Henri IV,” whilst I was at the “Lycée Saint-Louis,”—at least a competitor with him at the general examination. Curious fact! The delightful poet who wrote *Rolla* and *Namouna* gained, at the examination, the second prize for the Latin Dissertation on Philosophy. If one thinks that “philosophy” means in Greek love of wisdom, one may say perchance that this University reward contrasted strangely in advance with the physiognomy of *L’Enfant du Siècle* who deigned to practice neither the love of wisdom nor the wisdom of love.

We had met again on the benches of the Sorbonne, at the lectures of MM. Villemain, Guizot and Cousin. Afterwards we had cemented our intimacy at the residence of his close friend, Alfred Tattet, playing whist and *bouillotte*; by which means I had the honour and pleasure of hearing the first readings of *La Coupe et les Lèvres*, *Une bonne Fortune*, the Stanzas to Malibran, and the *Caprices de Marianne*. The sincere warmth of my applause was not unpleasing to him at a period when he was as yet only a great poet to a small circle. But what explained better still the readiness with which he held his hand out to me was that the Comédie-Française had just played the *Caprice* with brilliant success; that this success opened up new vistas at a moment when his poetic

verve seemed exhausted or fatigued; that he counted on doing a great deal more; and that thenceforward the dramatic critic of the *Revue* could become an important personage in his eyes.

The dinner was as lively as it could be for a gathering of men who were too superior not to paralyse one another. Ligier, who was acting at Reims, had sent some champagne—to get himself “puffed,” said Rachel maliciously. (She had but little sympathy for her somewhat aged Oreste.)

After leaving the table we formed a group, Jules Janin, Mérimée, Ampère, Alfred de Musset and myself, round the actress, who seemed in a tolerably good humour, although she passed her time in quarrelling and making friends again with the master of the house. I have no need to add that Musset wore his brightest smile.

We congratulated her on her last two creations, *Athalie* and *Cléopâtre*. “I owe much,” she said, “to Madame de Girardin, who has made an elegant pedestal for me in her clever newspaper *feuilletons*; but I feel myself quite out of place and very ill at ease when I create a *rôle* in a new piece. Now look, for example, at *Cléopâtre*; it is the work of a woman of infinite *esprit*, but it is sham, nothing but sham. You will tell me Corneille and Racine are not more truthful. But what a difference! I am too ignorant to define it; nevertheless I feel it. Help me.”

“It is the difference between the false and the ideal,” replied Ampère.

“Exactly. When I play Hermione, Phèdre, Roxane, Monime, Camille, Pauline, Émilie, I know well enough that their language is of a peculiar kind, that they never spoke like that, even if they ever existed. Only beneath that language there are sentiments, passions that are both human and immortal in their truth. They are mute but unbroken strings which it suffices to make vibrate in order to find an echo in every heart, in every soul.”

“And you succeed as no one ever succeeded before, neither Champmeslé, nor Gaussin, nor Adrienne Lecouvreur, nor Dumesnil, nor that old silly actress Duchesnois.”

“Be it so,” she answered, with a slight touch of melancholy. “Assuredly I cannot complain. The little guitar-player, the little street-singer is a princess and a queen to-day in the domain of Melpomene. I have a

Civil List, chamberlains, courtiers, confidants, male and female, like the heroines of classic tragedy. I give dinners, and I behold, seated at my table, diplomatists, peers of France, members of Parliament, academicians. Had I not preferred my dear liberty to everything, I should be the equal of the great ladies of the town; who knows? I could have married a duke or a marquis. Superb! And with all that I have done only a third of what was expected of me."

We protested; she continued.

"Oh! a truce to compliments, I beg of you. I indulge in no illusions. Yes, when I came out with the *éclat* you know of, the detractors of the romantic school—all those who declared that the revenge, the renaissance of the classic stage were personified in me—hoped three things: that I should enact to their liking the masterpieces of the old repertory (granted that I have fulfilled their anticipation); that I should hatch quite a brood of tragedians; and that I should inspire fresh authors worthy to gather up the thread of tradition at the point where it had been broken by the brutal hand of the "barbarians" of 1830. Alas! It will soon be ten years that I have been reigning on the illustrious boards of the Rue Richelieu. The new pieces that I have played (reluctantly and to oblige)—*Judith*, *Catherine II*, *Virginie*, *Le Vieux de la Montagne*, *Cléopâtre*—have only been half-successes or half-failures, and have left behind no trace of their passage. And observe this odd fact! I am not stupid enough to deny the immense superiority of Victor Hugo and Alexandre Dumas over the old academicians whose sleepy tragedies the committee of the Théâtre-Français receives "à corrections" and stows away in its drawers. Well, perhaps they sulk with me; perhaps they have never thought of writing a play for me.

"More, five years after my *début*, the provinces sent us a poet who was also saluted by the reactionary party as one who had come to reveal and to revenge—a vengeance in flesh and blood—Ponsard! Now, to whom did Ponsard confide his *Lucrèce* and his *Agnès de Méranie*? To Madame Dorval, the interpreter of the modern drama. To what actress did Victor Hugo entrust the part of Guanhamara in his *Burgraves*? Madame Théodorine Mélingue. I remain, therefore, with old Corneille

and tender Racine, like themselves, outside the movement which advances and which retrogrades in a kind of *impasse*—a happy accident, nothing more."

"Yes," replied Musset; "but now the place is clear. Mademoiselle Mars dead of old age; Madame Dorval *hors de combat*—dying."

"Mademoiselle Mars," rejoined Rachel, "answered those who reproached her with playing *ingénues*, young girls and Célimènes when she was between fifty and sixty by saying: 'I only act well when I *act young*.' With me it is the reverse. I am only in my element in what is *old*. I want to be separated from my authors by a distance of two centuries. Even Voltaire is too recent for me. At Firmin's farewell representation I played, by my own desire, Electra, in the tragedy of *Oreste*. Not only did I not 'electrify the public', but I hadn't the least success. My sister Rebecca had more than I."

"That," said the Comte Alexis de Saint-Priest, "is because the tragedies of Voltaire are not classical, but philosophical. No matter. Yesterday I heard one of the Forty say of you: 'She is more intelligent than Talma!'"

"Talma," she replied, with a certain amount of irony, "let us speak of Talma! I am reproached with not having brought forth tragedians of his height and force. Could I do it? My usual partners, Ligier, Beauvallet, Geoffroy, are my elders by twenty years. I give them the pleasure, denied them before my time, of playing before full houses, but I cannot conscientiously consider them as my pupils. Talma imparted a semblance of life to tragedies like *Sylla*, *Germanicus*, *Regulus*, *Léonidas*, and *Charles VI*. I have myself been unable to give an existence of more than six or seven weeks to works whose authors regarded me as the 'goose with the golden eggs.'

"Apart from all comparison between a great artist, nursed on serious reading, arrived at mature years, passionately fond of his art, escaped from the revolutionary furnace, witness of spectacles more tragic than the whole repertory of Corneille and Racine, and a poor ignorant girl, guided solely by her instincts, incapable of reasoning with her talent and her success, passed without transition from her poor lodging to the palaces of Theseus, Pyrrhus, and Agamemnon,—Talma's task was easier

than mine. A characteristic saying is attributed to Casimir Delavigne *à-propos* of the dramas of Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas, and Alfred de Vigny : 'What they do is not good, but it prevents their finding good in what I do.' Well, when Talma played Sylla or Léonidas he had not had behind him for years a single piece that could compete overwhelmingly with the works of Arnault, Jouy or Pichat. But you may say what you please about *Hernani*, *Ruy-Blas*, *Henri III*, *Marion Delorme*, *Christine à Fontainebleau*, *Antony*, and *Chatterton*. Suppose it to be bad. It is a special kind of badness highly flavoured, that ought to render insipid any attempted return to classic and tragic tradition, unless this innovator in the wrong direction were a man of genius."

"I am not a man of genius," said Alfred de Musset modestly, "still, I have only one ambition, and I will realise it. It is, my dear Rachel, to write a tragedy for you."

She regarded him with a singular expression, in which were mingled doubt, sadness, much friendship, and, may be, a little love.

"Oh, your tragedy," she said, "I will accept with my eyes shut—and undertake to play it."

At that moment Musset saw Régnier coming in, and went to ask him the total of the last receipts for the *Caprice*. Rachel followed him with her eyes and murmured :

"Poor Musset! That tragedy of his he will always talk about and never write! His genius is departing at the hour when success comes to him. What a martyrdom! To become celebrated the day one becomes incapable of sustaining one's celebrity. He is thirty-seven, I am twenty-eight. And both our roads are blocked."

* * *

April, 1855.

Another interval! Seven years, and what years! Revolutions, Days of Blood, a fallen Monarchy, a tricked Republic, a *Coup d'État*, a Dictatorship, an Empire! But these great events are foreign to our subject, to this chapter of our recollections. We are at the Théâtre Ventadour, where Madame Ristori is playing *Mirra* before an audience the like of which Mademoiselle Rachel cannot have attracted in her palmiest days. I can

afford an idea as to this by saying that M. Guizot, who had not been to the theatre for a quarter of a century, had allowed himself to be carried away by the enthusiasm of his children and was there half-hidden in a box. The Academy was brilliantly represented by MM. de Rémusat, Cousin, Mignet, Nisard, Molé, Legouvé, Pierre Lebrun, etc. Not one of the lady patronesses of the *Bel-esprit* was missing. So intense was the infatuation, so violent the applause, that it resembled a declaration of war. What was there to justify this? A *tragédienne* of undeniable talent, albeit she committed the mistake of associating with her statuesque attitudes the declamation and the gestures of melodrama. What besides? Nothing. *Mirra*, a tragedy by Alfieri, a miserable work, based upon a monstrous and repulsive motive, the incestuous love of a daughter for her father; such as by comparison would entitle to a certificate of virginal and baptismal innocence Phædra, Ænona, Clytemnestra, Hermione, Roxane, Cleopatra, Lucrezia Borgia, Marguerite de Bourgogne, and all the ancient and modern heroines of murder, of *guet-apens*, of treason, of adultery, and of poison. Alfieri's play, like all this pseudo-classic repertory—not even Canova compared to Phidias—concentrated in itself the whole of the vices of every kind and every school. How cold, false, empty, high-flown, declamatory, violent and wearisome, this dramatic system with its artificial nobility, its emphatic vulgarity, and an eloquence like that of a modern tribune parodying the Gracchi! It resembles at its best moments an *opera seria* with the music suppressed. And this unhappy Cinire, this father, object of a criminal and insensate passion was played by an actor who would have been hissed at Carpentras in a melodrama by Ducange or Pixérécourt! All the other artists were in proportion; a mere scratch company grouped well or ill around the Italian Melpomene. But how, then?— Oh! then you shall know if not all the causes, at least one of the causes of this fanaticism, which is at once an exaggeration, an injustice, and a cruelty. If it has happened that hisses have killed their victim, applause can do as much.

In a little pit-tier box, Mademoiselle Rachel was present at this triumphant performance. Was it really Rachel, or was it her ghost? *Jam pallida morte futura!* Every explosion of bravos had its rebound in this

emaciated chest. A veil, a black lace mantilla, her fan, the alteration in her face, the semi-darkness of her box helped to conceal her and make her unrecognizable to the general public. She had brought with her a journalist and a novelist who called me their friend. I thought I might present myself, and I was not badly received. "Come in, come in," she said to me. "I want to see some faces that are not hostile to me and will recall better days."

Just at that moment the stage was occupied by two of those grotesque nobodies who are never listened to.

"At any rate," muttered Rachel, "Ligier, Beauvallet, Geoffroy, and even Maubant himself are superior to these marionettes."

Ristori reappeared. The bravos, the stamping redoubled in vigour.

The French Melpomene turned towards me and with a heartbreaking accent of discouragement and pain exclaimed :

"What have I done to them? How they must detest me to applaud with this rapture a foreigner worse supported than I have been at Valence and at Aix!"

She continued : "They pretend that this woman personifies the Italian Renaissance and Italian Liberty; but have I not sung them the *Marseillaise*?"

"It is scarcely, perhaps, the best thing you ever did," thought I; but it would have been cruel to aggravate her despair even by uttering a truth.

"Did I not tell you," she resumed, "that my reign would be short, that I was turning round in the same circle, and that I should get out of it only to fall into disgrace and oblivion?"

"No, no," we answered, with more sympathy than conviction. "This is a crisis; your public, your Paris will come back to you, more enthusiastic than ever."

"Yes, a crisis that carries off the invalid—for I am very ill—my executioners ought to think of that."

She was interrupted by a fit of coughing. Then with artificial energy, with the vivacity of a consumptive person, she added : "I know well enough where the shoe pinched. I have often told you. I had only to

choose between two stumbling-blocks : either to play indefinitely and exclusively the old repertory, when the time must have come that the public grew weary of the monotony; or else to create new parts and place myself in contact with living authors, in which case I must have deteriorated, unless these authors had had the gift of inspiring me, unless their works had been grand enough to sustain and reassure me, so that there might not be too great a disparity between the past and the present."

She continued with a rebellious and feverish movement : "Is it my fault if *La Czarine* be not as good as *Andromaque*, if *Lady Tartuffe* be inferior to *Bajazet*, if *Diane* be below the level of *Polyeucte*, and *Adrienne Lecouvreur* below that of *Phèdre*? Is it my fault that Corneille and Racine have been unable to arise at my bidding and write half a score new masterpieces for me? Are they, indeed, no longer beautiful?"

Then—oh! exquisite yet painful sensation, such as can never be forgotten—during the penultimate *entr'acte* which was rather long, Rachel began to recite in a *mezza-voce*, so that we alone could hear her amidst the noise of the audience, some of those admirable lines that we had so often applauded at the Théâtre-Français when they fell triumphantly from her lips. It was a voice no longer, but a murmur, a sigh, a whisper, which seemed to exhale like a breath from her pale mouth, with an indescribably delicious and poignant effect. I have already said I had heard her in all her *rôles*, not once but ten times; and yet I seemed to be now hearing her for the first time :

"Dieux! que ne suis-je assise à l'ombre des forêts!
Quand pourrai-je, au travers d'une noble poussière,
Suivre de l'œil un char fuyant dans la carrière?

Je reconnus Vénus et ses feux redoutables,
D'un sang qu'elle poursuit tourments inévitables.

Où, prince, je languis, je brûle pour Thésée;
Je l'aime, non point tel que l'ont vu les enfers,
... Mais fidèle, mais fier, et même un peu farouche,
Charmant, jeune, traînant tous les cœurs après soi
Tel qu'on dépeint nos dieux, ou tel que je vous voi."

Then, in a few lines, she made pass before our eyes, like phantoms whose plaintive and desolate sister she might be, Roxane, Hermione,

Chimène, Camille, Émilie, Pauline, Monime, and Esther. It was like a funeral evocation,—the dead recalled to life by the dying.

In 1855, I was still young. I had still some imagination. It seemed to me as though this box, half plunged in darkness, were a tomb and these heavenly accents adieux.

Suddenly Rachel stopped; we were frightened at her pallor. "Come," she said, quite low, "am I not equal to this woman? Is it not finer than Alfieri?"

Our emotion prevented our answering. She perceived that we were weeping, and she added, with the strange smile of a visionary or a sick person: "Ah! those tears are my revenge, but they do not bring me to life again."

The curtain rose again. I took my leave. I was going away next day to the South.

"If you see my Marseilles friends," murmured Rachel, "tell them I shall pay them one more visit; but it will be to come and die there."

I never saw her again.

ARMAND DE PONTMARTIN.





THE CENTENARY OF THE "TIMES."

On the 1st of January, 1788, there appeared at London the first number of a newspaper bearing the title of the *Times*.

Of all the English daily newspapers then published, only one, older by ten years even than the *Times*, still exists, viz. the *Morning Post*.

In the first number, which contains the profession of faith of the new journal, the founder, John Walter, says : "The head of the *Times*, like that of Janus, is double-faced; with one it will smile continually on the friends of Old England, with the other it will frown incessantly on her enemies."

In the *Universal Register* which had been founded by him Mr. John Walter had already said : "Uninfluenced by party, uncontrolled by power, and attached solely to the public interest, every exertion shall be urged to insure a continuance of that support the journal has already experienced."

Whatever people may have said, and notwithstanding the attacks of which the *Times* may have been the object during its existence, it has

remained faithful to this rule of conduct. There is no other newspaper in the world whose name is more widespread, whose opinion is more frequently quoted and discussed, and whose history and existence attempts have been oftener made to trace and investigate; yet there is none which is less accurately known to the public than the *Times*.

With few exceptions, those who have made themselves the historians of that journal have only been able to judge it from a distance, and in their ignorance of the facts and the men have merely found the assurance necessary for introducing it to the public and for desiring to initiate their readers in a subject unfamiliar to them. Hence the legends which are current among the public and the random judgments of which it is the object.

Its very name, so often repeated, is ill-understood, and few people give themselves the trouble of knowing that the *Times* does not mean the time, nor even the times, but the ages, the centuries, that is to say everything which in the existence of peoples solicits human understanding.

Then, too, you will read a hundred times a day the phrase which has become stereotyped in France; "Le journal de la Cité dit," or "d'après le journal de la Cité on croit."

It has been impossible for me to discover the origin or cause of this designation.

Its office, which still occupies the site where stood three hundred years ago the monastery of the Black Friars (the Dominicans), near Blackfriars Bridge, at the entrance to Queen Victoria Street, is scarcely part of the City. Its leanings, its style, its politics and its aim have no relation with the City strictly speaking. Indeed the mistakes and fancies current respecting the *Times* would of themselves fill a volume, in which human stupidity, malice, and presumption would be displayed in all their perennial beauty.

I am about to try and soberly summarize the history of this journal, its first steps, its difficulties, its slow and certain progress, and the place it holds in the attention of the world. I confess, however, that I have rarely been confronted by a task more beset with difficulties, for if I can say all I

know, I can and ought to say only what I know, and the *Times*, even for those believed to be the most initiated, is not easily accessible to investigations. Those who conduct it and are its soul, are modest and taciturn workers, connected with a work to which they are too devoted to wish to parade their devotion, and the majority, one might almost say all of them, are so proud of the share falling on them in this common labour, that they conceal their activity, in order to take nothing away from the *Times*, which constitutes all their pride and sums up all their ambition.

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The great events which exercise a paramount influence on the course of things are nearly always due to complex accidents which strike the imagination when the cause is afterwards compared with the effects. It was a French man-of-war which caused the birth of the *Times*.

About 1780 Mr. John Walter No 1 had a large stake as underwriter in a fleet of merchant vessels which were returning to England. A French man-of-war, cruising in sight of the English coast, chased the merchant fleet, and reinforced by the rest of the squadron of which it formed a part, captured it and carried it off as a prize to France. In this disaster John Walter's loss amounted to £80,000, which was the almost entire result of long years of labour, intelligence, enterprise, and probity successively evinced by himself and his father.

This John Walter was the son of a large coal-buyer at Newcastle. He was born in 1738, and lost his father in 1755. At the age of 17 he succeeded him, married at 33, was the Chairman of the powerful body of coal-buyers at Newcastle, superintended the erection of a Coal Exchange, became a member of Lloyd's, and was on the high road to an immense fortune, when the intervention of the French squadron of which I have spoken destroyed at one blow the capital amassed by his father and himself. If indignation makes verses it also inspires pamphlets, and John Walter published one in which he related the misfortune which had befallen him, urged that it was for the Government to compensate him for a loss which he had not occasioned or deserved, and failing repayment in money, claimed an appointment which should make up to him

for the disaster which he had undergone. Lord North, to whom his application was addressed and who was about to grant it, died, and with his death disappeared Mr. John Walter's chance of promptly repairing the loss which had befallen him.

Little inclined gradually to regain his fortune by recommencing the steady toil of two generations, the results of which a maritime mishap had just swept away, and being over 40 years of age, he found himself under the necessity either of changing his business or regaining it.

Just at this time he made the acquaintance of Henry Johnson, a compositor who had effected, or at least thought so, an immense improvement in printing. His idea was to substitute syllables and entire words for the separate letters used in type composing. Among seductive inventions there is none which produced more obstinate illusions than that of Henry Johnson. John Walter was for years one of the warmest disciples of "logotypes" or "logography," as the invention had been christened. He hired, as associate of Henry Johnson, the inventor, the premises in Printing House Square, in the parish of Saint-Anne, where the *Times* office now stands and where, in 1666, John Bill printed the *London Gazette*.

John Walter was not a man to join in an idea for the simple purpose of making a profit by it in return for his capital. He desired to contribute his share of improvement, his personal cooperation, and his direct activity. He learned the art of printing with indefatigable ardour; the apprentice soon became a master, took out, along with Henry Johnson, a printing patent, and sought to strengthen his own opinion by the most competent judges of the time. Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society, congratulated him on the invention submitted to him, which he considered a powerful means of diffusing the art and usage of printing, and Benjamin Franklin, who was himself an excellent printer, encouraged him in terms no less warm. Mr. John Walter set himself to work more resolutely than ever. For the immediate operation of his system of printing, in which he had made considerable improvements, for Henry Johnson had submitted it to him merely in a rudimentary and almost theoretical state, he founded a newspaper which appeared in 1785 under the title

of the *Universal Register* and which was the forerunner of the *Times*.

Henry Johnson's invention, in his belief, was not only to effect a great saving, but was especially to promote the diffusion of reading, and thereby spread education among the mass of the English nation. Accordingly one of the earliest publications which issued from his workshop was a pamphlet in favour of the diffusion of logotypic or logographic printing, which the Duke of Portland, a nobleman who was also interested in logography and had tried it, undertook to present to the king.

John Walter's obstinate belief in the value of Henry Johnson's invention lasted more than three years. He struggled desperately with the difficulties of an invention which in practice produced bitter disappointments.

Composition, it is true, was quicker and cheaper with ready made syllables and words than with separate letters, but the number of characters was very cumbrous, the supply of them very *costly*, the fitting up *costly*, and if composition was cheaper the corrections were expensive, as whole syllables or words had to be corrected where under the ordinary system merely letters had to be altered. Shortly after the *Universal Register* had given place to the *Times*, the paper ceased to be printed logographically, and the logographic system was soon entirely abandoned at Printing House Square.

This system, which foiled the extraordinary energy and great intelligence of the first John Walter, must however have had fascinating features, for in 1856 a Pole, Major Beniowski, who had effected some improvements in logography, took out a patent, and interested in his system Captain John Green, M. P., who, despite the opposition of Mr. Gladstone, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, obtained the appointment of a select committee to consider the question.

The committee reported that the evidence given before it was so conflicting that it could come to no decision.

It would seem that such antecedents ought to have put an end to logography; not so. In 1884, just a hundred years after Henry Johnson met John Walter, I was called upon by a French gentleman whose name escapes me, who asked me to devote a few hours to visiting an esta-

blishment the object of which ought to interest me. On arriving at this establishment I was amazed to find it a logographic printing office. My surprise was still greater when the gentleman in question asked me to forward to the manager of the *Times* pamphlets explaining his system and to inquire whether he would not adopt it in his newspaper office. I have heard nothing since, but have always fancied that the gentleman, who was in perfect good faith, had been the victim of some rogue aware of the unsuccessful attempts made in England who had taken advantage of them for making a French dupe.

Yet notwithstanding the abandonment of logography, the printing office had prospered, and the *Universal Register*, whilst being transformed into the *Times*, must have greatly contributed to make the printing office known, to draw customers, and to compensate Mr. John Walter for the perseverance with which he had devoted himself to the promotion of logography.

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The first number of the *Times*, did not materially differ from the other newspapers of the period. What is interesting to notice is that the paper published in London on the 1st of January, 1788, foreign news from Rotterdam and Paris dated the 25th December, 1787, that is to say seven days old, from Frankfort dated the 14th December, that is to say eighteen days old, from Warsaw the 5th December, that is to say twenty-seven days after despatch, and from Constantinople the 10th November, that is to say fifty-two days after.

When I receive the *Chinese Times*, which takes on the average forty-five days to reach me, I cannot help feeling a singular impression on reading, on the first column, news which was telegraphed to it from Europe and which I had quite forgotten by the time I meet with it again at the top of the well-informed Tien-tsin paper as the latest news reaching Li-Hung Tchang's vice-regal residence.

A similar impression is experienced on seeing in the first number of the *Times*, which in 1874 inaugurated daily and regular telegraphic correspondence, news from Constantinople fifty-two days old.

Under the heading "Theatre," this first number gave a brief critique of the Hamlet being acted at Drury Lane, exactly as in Alexandre Dumas' play "Kean," and of "Henry IV," which was being performed at Covent Garden.

The column entitled "Cuckoo," which corresponds to the French "Nouvelles du jour," and contained the numberless rumours, the accidents, gossip, and scandal for which there was then great avidity, has disappeared in London not merely from the pages of the *Times*, but from all the great morning papers, and is found only in a few evening papers, in the weekly so-called society papers, and lower down in the few scurrilous papers published in England.

In the kind of profession of faith given by this first number are the two political passages I have already quoted, and the rest is devoted to advertisements.

Among these advertisements the one now of most interest, embodying an idea which might even now make the fortune of an intelligent speculator at Paris if applied to the Opéra, the Comédie-Française, and hereafter to the new Opéra-Comique, is an announcement by a person giving only his initials, informing the ladies who had ordered them that the fans, each bearing the number of the box and the name of the subscriber to whom it belongs, are ready for delivery. Such fans, made with taste and plainly marked would certainly have a great success, and I am surprised that this idea, which goes back 100 years, has not yet been carried out at Paris.

At the date when the first number of the *Times* appeared, a newspaper printing four or five thousand copies was classed among journals having a good circulation. The *Times*, which now sometimes consists of 20 pages, and sometimes of 12, but usually 16, which is equivalent to a daily publication of 16 pages, prints daily, reckoning only one side of the paper, a strip a yard wide by 310 miles long, and would cover a surface of 110 acres. Yet the paper made very slow progress.

Mr. W. Fraser Rae, who has published on the beginnings of the *Times* a remarkable article, which the *Times* has made official by commending it in a leading article, and from which I have borrowed many details, relates that in September 1789, that is to say nearly two years after the appear-

ance of the first number, Horace Walpole wrote to the Countess of Ossory : "Have you seen Mr. Cambridge's excellent verses, called the Progress of Liberty? They were printed last Wednesday in a newspaper called the *Times*, but they are ascribed to a young lady." "A newspaper called the *Times*," twenty-one months after its appearance. Unfortunately for its proprietor and editor, the newspaper was not unknown enough for the delinquencies which crept into it to escape notice. In 1789 the *Times* questions the sincerity of the joy with which the Dukes of York, Gloucester, and Cumberland had received the news of his not very Gracious Majesty George the Third's recovery. Mr. John Walter was condemned to a fine of £50, to stand in the pillory at Charing Cross, and to twelve months' imprisonment in Newgate.

While he was undergoing this imprisonment two other crimes equally horrible were imputed to him. The paper had said that the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York had so demeaned themselves as to be severely rebuked by the king, and that the Duke of Clarence had returned to England without authority from the Admiralty or from his commanding officer.

Mr. John Walter was taken from Newgate, brought before the Court, and condemned for these two fresh offences to another year's imprisonment and £200 fine.

The indignation you feel on recalling these condemnations must be repressed, and you must bow with respect to the man who could persist in his vocation and who resumed his post of combat, simply, without faltering or boasting, when after 16 months of imprisonment he was liberated on the intercession of the Prince of Wales.

For a moment, indeed, notwithstanding all his energy, he thought of giving up the paper, and confining himself to his printing business, which had become considerable. Besides the persecution he had undergone, besides the sufferings inflicted on him, his paper, after a struggle which had lasted three years, was a losing concern.

To be prosecuted, convicted, exposed in the pillory, imprisoned, and lose money was really more than could be expected of a man, especially as, having entered very late on journalism, he had only a confused instinct

of it, did not clearly discern the future, and thought he was doing much greater service by publishing good books than by editing a paper which could not without danger tell the smallest truth, yet if it did not tell it had no aim or position. These hesitations, fortunately for the enterprise which has since given forth so great a lustre, did not last.

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John Walter II, born in 1776, had learned printing while pursuing his studies and had acquired consummate ability in that art. He was then studying at Oxford with the intention of entering the Church. His father summoned him to his side, made him share in his labours, and in 1803 intrusted to him at the age of twenty-seven the entire management of the *Times*.

The greatness, influence, and prosperity of the *Times* date from that moment.

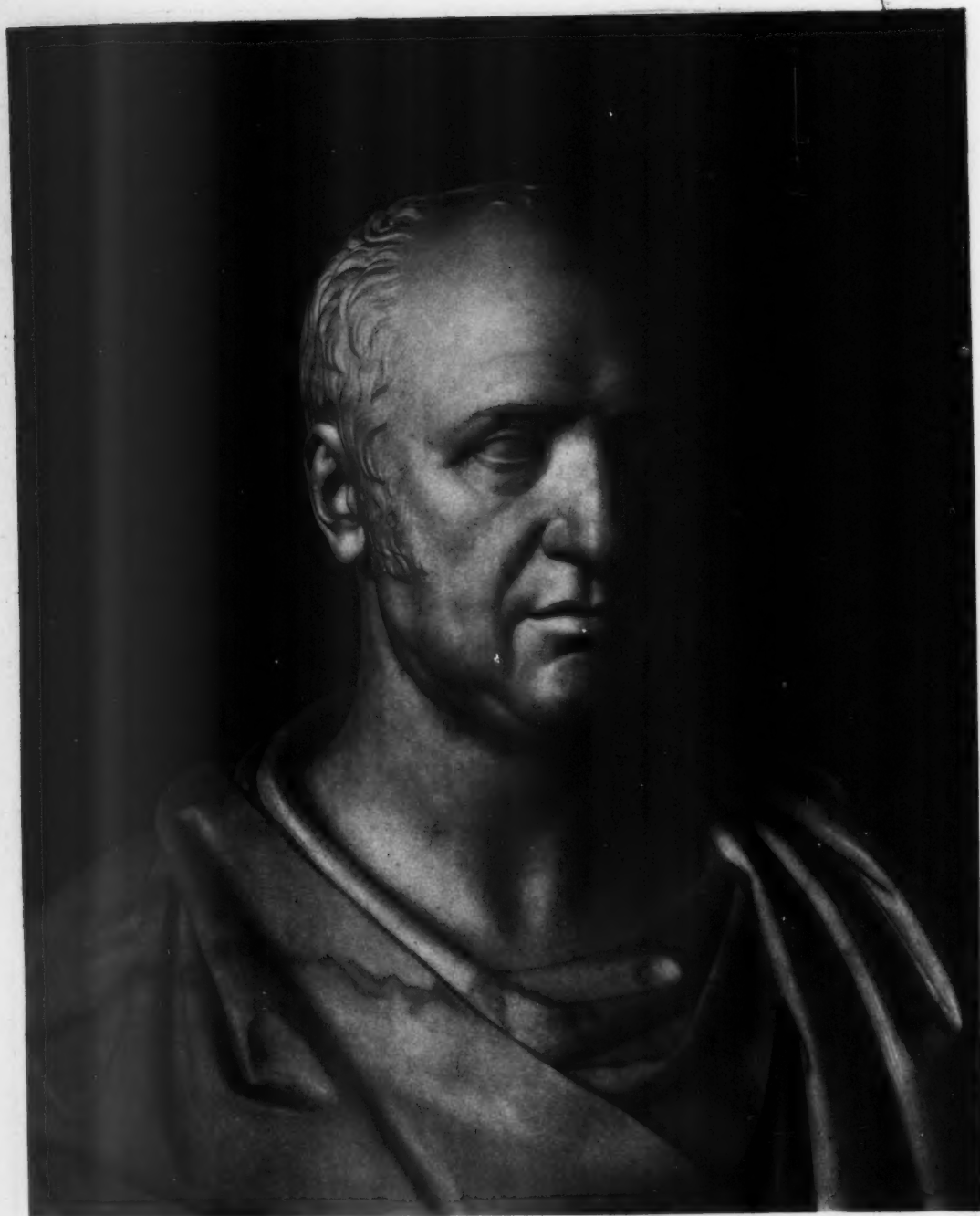
John Walter II began by gaining for his newspaper the most entire independence. Moved by patriotism alone, he supported Lord Sidmouth's administration. When that administration was supplanted by the second Pitt cabinet, the *Times* sharply attacked the conduct of Lord Melville, who was accused of misappropriating public money and was obliged to resign all his offices.

The Government retorted by withdrawing the printing for the customs from John Walter I and all official advertisements from the *Times*. On Pitt's death, as the *Times* approved the policy of his successors, John Walter II was advised to appeal to the Government for the restoration of the favours withdrawn from his father.

He indignantly refused, and never agreed to such an application being made to the Cabinet, even by third parties, and without his signature figuring at the foot of the memorial.

He had made great changes in the staff of the newspaper, which was entirely remodelled. He had abolished the theatrical puffs then published by the newspapers and paid for.

As each newspaper had the specialty of certain advertisements, some for servants, others for foreign merchandise, provisions, horses and carriages,



houses to sell or let, auctions, etc., he determined to abolish these distinctions, to attract all advertisements, sifting them, not by class, but to have only respectable advertisements, and to give that part of the paper as complete and general extensiveness as possible.

To attain this object the best means was to make his paper the best in form, the best got-up, and consequently the most widely read paper.

The anxiety of the public was excited in 1810 by military events and by the wars constantly going on, on the continent.

He tried to organize speedy information, but the Government which he criticized with unusual independence treated him without mercy, detained the newspapers, and intercepted the letters addressed to him, and threw all the obstacles in his way which could prevent the success of his efforts.

He frequently triumphed, and gained a decided victory by publishing in 1809 the capitulation of Flushing forty-eight hours before the Government had information of it.

As news then reached England only by the French papers, he ended by arranging with a smuggler who was in collusion with a French custom house officer, and who agreed to substitute for the smuggling of goods the no less reprehensible smuggling of newspapers.

His plan, however, was soon known to other papers, and in a short time every journal had its smuggler and competed with the *Times*.

John Walter then had the idea of superseding information almost exclusively derived from the Continental papers by intelligence of his own, and of having on the Continent a man devoting himself entirely to his paper and sending him news peculiar to the *Times*; he resolved on having a special correspondent.

The first special correspondent of the *Times*, who in that capacity resided in 1807 at Altona on the Elbe, a few miles from Hamburg, was Henry Crabb Robinson. It is difficult to understand why Crabb Robinson fixed himself at Altona.

He was the first of those pioneers of journalism who have since made their appearance wherever an event worthy of public attention occurs, everywhere displaying equal activity and constant emulation, not grudging

their efforts, and displaying to the surprise of the world incomprehensible audacity, not always justified by the importance of the result attained or even that aimed at.

In England the correspondent has taken a position which he has not gained everywhere else. The British isles are severed from the rest of the world by the silver streak which both protects and isolates them, and the rumours which reach them from abroad are the only link which uninterruptedly connect them with the rest of the world.

The corps of English newspaper correspondents has its heroes whom it names with pride. It likes to recall the brilliant career of Billy Russell, whose Crimean campaign is a marvel of graphic description, cool daring, and unalterable good humour; the exploits of Archibald Forbes, who was the admiration of the armies whose fatigues and dangers he shared and whose exploits he related in a uniformly correct and striking manner; the brilliant and brief career of Lawrence Oliphant, who wherever he passes leaves an ineffaceable mark; the observations, so true, lofty, and profound, of Mackenzie Wallace, who has quitted journalism only to fill by the side of his friend Lord Dufferin one of the highest positions in British India.

But Crabb Robinson remains after eighty years the model of the acute, concise, temperate and quietly courageous correspondent.

He has had many successors but few rivals, and his letters, dated from the banks of the Elbe and the shores of the bay of Biscay, remain models which must be seen and studied to understand how, to the way in which he first fulfilled his mission, is due the extension of correspondence, and the importance since assumed by this part of world wide journalism.

He had completed his education in Germany. There he was acquainted with Schiller, then in all the ardour of his imagination; with Goethe, who already towered on the world; with Augustus and Frederic Schlegel; with all that elite whom the eighteenth century prepared and who have cast on German literature of the nineteenth century a lustre which will last beyond its end.

Crabb Robinson left everywhere only friends. He died at the age of ninety-four, in that unpretending position, without display or care, which

is reserved for the faithful servants of the *Times*, and which should be the ambition and honour of those fulfilling a mission whose sincerity and good faith are both its strength and its object.

In the spring of 1810, at the moment when John Walter II was most absorbed in advancing the newspaper, a threatening conspiracy broke out among his compositors.

The wars of the Empire were raging on the Continent, and the English public were more and more eager for the warlike rumours which crossed the Straits and jeopardised the gravest interests of the kingdom.

Mr. John Walter had only a few hours's warning of the impending strike, an increase of wages, and a reduction of hours, being the announced object.

Fortunately the strike began on pay day, Saturday.

The *Times* did not and never has appeared on Sundays, and here I may say in passing that except Sundays, it has not in hundred years missed a day in appearing; and Mr. John Walter II had forty hours before him to ward off the danger.

Without a word to the ringleaders, without trying to reason with them, he hurriedly collected a few apprentices in the office, and a few unemployed printers from outside, donned an apron, and at the head of this untrained and scanty squad, he worked incessantly for thirty-six hours.

The strikers, who had not come back to the office, were amazed to see the *Times* appear at the regular hour on Monday morning and circulate as usual, without any apparent change in its getting-up.

The strike went on thus for five months.

The strikers threatened those on their way to the printing office, a few were intimidated, and every day during these terrible five months, defections and absence occasioned by fear were noticed which cast on the brave conductor of the enterprise, superhuman efforts, from which, he every day emerged triumphant.

In the end the violence and threats of the strikers were such, that the police interfered; twenty-one of them were tried at the Old Bailey, and nineteen were sentenced to punishments varying from nine months,

to two years imprisonment. To this indomitable energy the *Times* owes its ability now to celebrate its centenary. Had it ceased to appear a single day the cycle would have been broken and it would have dated from its reappearance, if indeed it had reappeared.

Its organisation is now such that nothing, not even the disappearance of its premises, would prevent it from appearing in a way sufficient at least to have no interruption of the course of its existence.

But in 1810 the danger was immense, and anybody but the energetic, devoted, and self-possessed man who then conducted the *Times* would have been vanquished by this mishap. As though the first John Walter had awaited these events, which showed him that the work founded by him had passed into hands which would not let it totter, he died on the 16th November of the following year, at the age of seventy-four, at Teddington.

His son was then thirty-six, and for nine years had had the sole management of the paper.

The printing business as well as the paper was prosperous, and the founder of the *Times*, went to the grave with the consciousness that he left a work which would prevent his name from disappearing with him.

During the nine years's sole management of the paper by John Walter II, an immense change, however, had occurred.

At the time the management was intrusted to him, it had the smallest circulation of the five journals then existing in London : the *Morning Chronicle*, *Morning Post*, *Morning Herald*, *Morning Advertiser*, and *Times*, for in this order was classed their circulation.

Its sale at the beginning of this century, did not exceed a thousand copies a day.

In 1812, when his father died, John Walter had multiplied this sale more than tenfold, for it exceeded 12,000 copies and had the same price as at present, threepence a copy.

Another difficulty then arose.

The means of production, the composition, especially the printing by hand, became inadequate.

The size had been considerably increased; the advertisements, and variety of news had burst its bounds :

Et du premier Consul, déjà par maint endroit
Le front de l'Empereur perçait le masque étroit;

the *Times* of to-day was then foreshadowed.

Fresh obligations required fresh means, and John Walter II felt that printing had not reached perfection, that machinery and steam would sooner or later become indispensable auxiliaries. Haunted by this idea he first applied to Brunel, one of the greatest engineers of his age. But Brunel, able to make the tunnel under the Thames, declared himself incapable, after devoting some time to it, of realising the idea of John Walter II, and Thomas Martyn, to whom he advanced money for studying it, offered a very seductive theory which was found impracticable.

While Mr. John Walter thus encountered the powerlessness of human genius to realise an idea which seemed to him rational, a German, Friedrich Koenig, born at Eisleben in 1774, had conceived the plan of a steam press. He had gone to England at the age of thirty-three, in the hope of finding the necessary capital for carrying out his conception, and had there met Thomas Bensley, with whom he made an agreement and who, indeed, supplied him with the means of prosecuting his projects.

This was in 1807. At that date Mr. Walter had still to encounter internal material difficulties, the circulation of the *Times* was increasing very slowly, and the obligation of facing a larger circulation by more expeditious means had not yet imperatively struck his mind. When Bensley informed him that Koenig had unfolded a plan of his future steam press, he did not pay all the attention it deserved to this overture and did not entertain Bensley's offer.

In 1812, on the contrary, when Koenig had completed the construction of his steam press, he found John Walter II quite ready to study his invention with all the interest due to it.

Koenig and Bensley invited the chief newspaper editors to witness the first experiments. Hardly any of these editors responded to their invitation. John Walter II, on the contrary, not only witnessed the experiments,

but ordered on the spot two double presses of the new model. It took two years to make them. When they were ready they began very mysteriously to be set up in a part of the *Times* office at a distance from that where the hand presses were at work.

Notwithstanding the secrecy surrounding it, a rumour spread among the men that there was to be printing by steam and that the use of the new power would dispense with their services.

There were again designs of violence and vengeance which had to be seriously faced.

What was their amazement however, when on the 29th of November, 1814, at 6 in the morning, John Walter II entered the printing office, holding a bundle of printed sheets in his hand, and informed them that they were copies of the *Times* printed by steam and ready for distribution. At the same time he stated that every precaution had been taken for suppressing the slightest attempt at disturbance, but that if they would quietly accept the accomplished fact the wages of all would be continued until they could get work elsewhere.

Everything passed off quietly, and that day appeared the first newspaper printed by steam.

The *Times* may be said to have always taken the lead in all the improvements which have marked the gigantic march of modern journalism, just as it may be added that in the enlightened craft of journalism no improvement has been attempted and realized without promptly finding imitators and very soon rivals.

From that day to his death, which happened in 1847, John Walter II constantly studied improvements in the method of printing a newspaper, and when he died the Koenig machine, which turned out 1100 copies an hour, was merely a recollection.

One of the chief events in the career of John Walter II, and it may be said, in the career of the *Times*, was a letter from its Paris correspondent, Mr. O'Reilly, denouncing in full detail the arrangements of a plot which had been concocted with a view to defrauding foreign bankers, by means of bills artfully drawn and discounted and other proceedings of the same kind, of a million of money. Those who had contrived the plot were

numerous, and they had already, at the outset of their dangerous operations, pocketed £10,000.

O'Reilly publicly denounced them in his letter, and the *Times*, without being under any illusion as to the consequences of this step, opened wide its columns to its courageous correspondent. Allan George Bogle, one of the accomplices, forced either to make a tacit confession or to defend himself, immediately sued the *Times* for libel. The case was tried at Croydon, on the 16th of March, 1844, before the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas.

In the ten months which had elapsed between the publication of the letter and the trial the *Times'* lawyer had gone over the Continent, had made laborious and costly inquiries, had collected documents, and had obtained evidence, and in short, in a case in which it was impossible to adduce positive proof, had gathered all the data capable of enlightening the minds of the judge and jury.

The jury, who could not avoid giving a verdict against a newspaper adducing very conclusive but theoretical data, inasmuch as the actual proof had been destroyed by the parties concerned, awarded Allan George Bogle a farthing damages, a significant fact in a country where heavy fines are one of the chief means of curbing the press.

The Chief Justice, moreover, to show the feeling of the court, refused to certify for costs, which are usually the most expensive part of press cases in England.

Thus the jury and the court joined in submitting on the one hand to imperative laws and in testifying their esteem for the newspaper which they were obliged formally to condemn.

But the bankers, merchants, and even ordinary inhabitants of the city, touched by and grateful for the service which the paper had rendered them, assembled at a great meeting convened at the Mansion House under the presidency of the Right Hon. Sir John Pirie, Bart., Lord Mayor of London, chairman and treasurer of the committee, where it was decided that a subscription should be opened for the purpose of covering the cost of the case and of giving the newspaper which had rendered such a service a testimony of the gratitude felt for it by the

citizens. The subscription was limited to £2 per head, as only a comparatively small sum was necessary.

As soon as this decision was known, subscriptions flowed in on all sides, and the amount reached in a few days £2700, which exceeded the assigned amount, and necessitated the closing of the subscription almost at starting.

The *Times* refused to accept the sum offered it for covering the costs of the trial, and it was then determined that two permanent scholarships entitled "*Times* Scholarships" should be founded with £2542, and that the remaining 150 guineas should be expended in two marble tablets, one placed in the Royal Exchange and the other in a conspicuous part of the *Times* office, containing in gilt letters an inscription recording the homage awarded to that paper for the great service rendered to London commerce and banking.

In 1847 John Walter II died. He was seventy-two years of age. For forty-three years he had been at the head of the *Times*.

He had achieved a career full of honour and glory, having sat in Parliament uninterruptedly for many years and leaving much wealth—the interest in the *Times* as it then existed and a considerable fortune,—every penny of which was associated with industry, probity, and honour.

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John Walter II bequeathed something better than this; he bequeathed to those who succeeded him and who have thus far worthily borne the burden of that inheritance, and he bequeathed to his country, a veritable national institution, the weighty utterances of which bring an immense force to the cause it defends, and whose attacks almost certainly overwhelm those whom it combats.

It has no doubt, in its turn, according as it supports one side and turns against the other, to undergo hatreds, insinuations, and calumnies, but nobody is misled by this, and people know that the insults would speedily be converted into eulogiums if those thus attacked were weak-minded enough to prefer eulogiums which debase to insults which honour them.

From the commencement of its existence to our day the line of conduct of the *Times* has not varied, though it has often changed sides and combated to-day those it supported yesterday, which is just the case at this moment. But it has never hesitated to subordinate questions of party or men to questions of principle, and to what it believed to be the supreme interest of the nation as regarded England or the supreme interest of society as regarded foreigners. This is why it is difficult to understand it abroad, and in France, where party passion is at a climax, less than elsewhere.

It was imputed to it as a crime in this country to be better informed than all the other papers during the war, which unfortunately was equivalent to saying that it was the first to announce disasters which were but too well verified.

People forgot that Marshal Lebœuf had refused to receive any foreign correspondent in the army, whereas the Germans granted them the greatest facilities. The result was that the German army had ardent champions in the columns of the *Times*, whereas nobody related the futile but often glorious efforts of the French army.

Deeming the war calamitous, and holding, like all England indeed, that it was France who had declared it, the *Times* showed irritation against this country which the Imperial dynasty had incited to the combat and which had allowed itself to be drawn into it, but its disapproval of those who had declared war never went beyond the misfortune of their country, and since the war the *Times* has been nearly always found on the side of France.

It should also be remarked that the *Times* greatly undergoes the rebound of that inveterate sentiment which leads the French to like the English individually and to be hostile to their country.

I was dining one day with Henri Meilhac. Beside him was a handsome lady unknown to him. In the course of conversation she told him she was English.

"Surely not, surely not," said Meilhac in a vexed tone, "surely not, you are not English."

"But, my dear Meilhac," said I, "explain to me why you, who are no

politician and have no political prejudices, have a grudge against the English."

"Why, really," said Meilhac, reflecting and scratching his head, "I believe that goes back to Joan of Arc."

How many Frenchmen who rage against the *Times*, which for them personifies England, if driven into a corner would be found to confess that "that goes back to Joan of Arc."

But this is not surprising seeing that the rage let loose against the *Times* in England itself has often no better ground, and that the grudge against it there is chiefly because it has the better of those it combats.

From its origin it is almost constantly seen supporting causes which end by triumphing, and exasperating its adversaries who reproach it with causing the triumph by its influence of the causes defended by it.

Thus it opposed slavery and powerfully contributed to the extirpation of that plague spot; thus it defended the Reform Bill, which triumphed, Free Trade which was victorious, the disestablishment of the Irish Church, the Land Bill, the Extension of the suffrage, the redistribution of seats, measures which all ended by being carried.

Thus, as Mr. Fraser Rae remarks, it mitigated the treatment of Queen Caroline, who still had honour enough left to die of shame; thus, too, at the last election with a vigour, sagacity, and patriotism whose intelligence and sincerity inspire marvels, it places itself on the side of the Unionists, combats the Separatists, wages war without truce or mercy against the fatal vagaries of Mr. Gladstone, and by one of the finest election campaigns ever known, which devotes its young editor to the hatred of the vanquished party, leads the majority of the nation in its train, and protects with all its victorious power the United Kingdom against the eventual disintegration contemplated by a misled minority, reckless of the mischief it hatches.

Its support certainly contributes to the success of the cause it defends, but the chief reason is that it judges calmly and loftily, disinterested in the struggle, regardless of danger, not sharing in the profits of the victor, in the sole and real interest of the country, or at least of what it consi-

ders such; and logic, which strikes the English mind above everything, always ends by getting a majority on its side of the scale.

It was however seriously mistaken in the Secession War which broke out in America. It took the side of the South, maintained a cause condemned by humanity and common sense, defended fallacies which it had formerly had the honour of defeating, and consequently misled public opinion and witnessed the annihilation of the cause of which it had made itself the champion. It thus expiated the mistake of having in this case put passion in the place of reason, and of having had in view rather a kind of revenge of Old England than a sound and just appreciation of the things and men it had to judge.

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John Walter III, he who is now at the head of the paper, succeeded his father at the age of twenty-seven.

He understood from the outset the weight of the legacy devolving on him, and exerted his greatest efforts to prevent its being impaired in his hands.

At the time when John Walter II died, the editorship had for seven years been entrusted to John Thaddeus Delane, who at the age of 30 had been invested with this serious responsibility.

He had speedily justified so high a position, and while John Walter III set himself to follow the paternal example by more and more improving the means of production, John Delane conducted the editing with rare and admirable ability. He was distinguished by prompt and firm decision, by the quick appreciation of men in whom he detected marked aptitudes, and by the oneness of view which he impressed on the great intellectual machine entrusted to his direction.

According to a custom which has become a strict rule he reached his office at half past ten at night.

He there found by the care of the sub-editors, the materials of the day, the correspondence, home and foreign, a summary of the events in London and the provinces, the letters addressed to the editor of the *Times*, all that mass of information, all those numberless echoes,

which from the four corners of the world deserve to attract attention.

With a prompt glance he dispatched the secondary matters requiring no comment or reflection, kept back the questions connected with home or foreign policies or the Government, came to a prompt decision on each question, and sent for the writers of the four leaders which appear every day.

He indicated to each in a clear and precise way the line to be taken, the opinion to which he clung, and generally in a few sentences gave the materials which had to be worked out.

The leader writers immediately set to work on sheets of blue paper all cut and ready, in the four rooms assigned to them. A large table, excellent lighting—now electricity,—ink, pens, some green morocco chairs, a sofa to recline on in the interval of proof correcting if tired, an office chair and a small reference library, such is the furniture placed at the disposal of the regular contributors to the *Times*.



On the death of John Walter II and when the Mr. John Walter now living took the chief management of the *Times*, the paper had not the building now used by it, nor the telegraphic news nor the manifold conveniences, now placed at its service.

These two men, however, one of whom constantly improved the getting up of the paper, while the other directed the spirit of it, always kept on the same track, and Mr. Delane modified the system of editing in proportion as Mr. John Walter improved the getting up.

Each of them in his special task was aided by a second self—Mr. Delane by his brother-in-law, Mr. Mowbray Morris, who was the manager, Mr. John Walter by Mr. John Cameron Mac-Donald, who was his right hand and devoted himself with unlimited pains to the realization of the progress aimed at by his chief.

The *Times* office was a very rudimentary building almost even up to the time when Mr. John Delane gave up the editorship.

The advertisements were received in a small building at one corner of Printing House Square, which only three or four persons could enter at once, and I well remember seeing those who wanted to insert advertisements waiting in the small square without shelter from rain or wind till their turn arrived.

There is in this simple fact an important theory which explains the power of the English Press; an advertisement direct, without agency, is considered so obligatory a course that those wishing to employ it do not shrink from sacrificing some hours and undergoing much fatigue to hand in their advertisement.

Advertising in the serious daily papers has been a considerable resource, and has lost nothing of its importance and bearing.

There are certain advertisements which you find in one paper and not in another, because they do not correspond to the class of readers to whom the paper appeals.

Thus for instance you would never find in the columns of the *Times* an advertisement of a public-house to sell, nor has that paper ever accepted "showy" advertisements—big letters which attract attention at the expense of more modest advertisements.

Thus, too, it never undertakes to insert an advertisement in one particular column. In short it has always reserved itself the fullest latitude for the position and classification of advertisements in the columns of the paper.

Of course for a paper to be able to impose such conditions on those forming its most important customers, it must understand the value of the cooperation it offers, and must exert a constant and strict control over the medium it places at the disposal of the public.

And it is thus that things have happened. No advertisement published in the *Times* escapes observation. The English reader goes straight to it with entire confidence and finds a facility for everything of which no idea can be formed, for hitherto those inserting the advertisement, those publishing it, and those profiting by it—I am speaking of course only

of the *Times*, with which alone I have to concern myself here have with very rare exceptions shown a perfect good faith which all three have found to their advantage.

Such being the case, you can understand how the *Times* could for generations keep up its advertisements in the small unsheltered square, and how those employing this means of publicity did not shrink from the fatigue which it involved.

All this is altered.

Under the present John Walter, Printing House Square has been entirely transformed. It is now a large red brick building, with a frontage decorated with the traditional clock, in Queen Victoria Street and two entrances in Printing House Square. It contains workshops where all the materials used by the *Times* are made, a type foundry, a printing office, editors' rooms, managers' rooms, lodgings for subordinates and apartments for Mr. John Walter at the time when he resides at his splendid seat, Bearwood, Berkshire, and when his Hyde Park mansion is shut up. From the main entrance in Queen Victoria Street you pass on the right into a spacious office where behind the counters numerous clerks are constantly occupied in receiving the advertisements now brought them by people waiting in the space reserved for the public, conveniently seated, where writing materials and even books of reference are provided.

The printing presses, which have been the constant solicitude of the Walter dynasty, have reached under John Walter III a perfection it will be difficult to surpass. Applegath improved the Koenig machine by introducing vertical cylinders, which printed 8,000 copies an hour, and Mr. John Walter soon afterwards adopted the more improved cylinders of the American Hoe. Dellagana, an Italian, encouraged by Mr. John Walter III invented the process of making stereotype plates with papier mâché casts, and owing to these triple improvements the working of the machines set up in the *Times* office rose to 12,000 copies an hour.

From 1863 to 1871 three successive patents were taken out by John Cameron Mac-Donald and Joseph Calverley, and these patents led up to the construction of the present Walter machine, ten of which work every night in the *Times* office, propelled by a powerful steam engine, the



printing of the paper beginning at four and the last copy of the first edition being issued at five in the morning.

The real editorial work begins about 11 p. m., but at that hour the outer sheet containing the title, advertisements, and some lengthy articles not strictly news, is ready printed.

At 11 o'clock the editor has given his general orders and confers with the leader writers. The latter withdraw to their rooms, where from half past 11 the printers' boys come and fetch the copy every ten minutes, each sheet of the leading articles being distributed in turn among a special staff of compositors assigned to each of the four articles which with rare exceptions appear regularly and discuss the political, social, scientific, or other questions which passing events force on public attention.

Meanwhile the editor, his immediate assistant, and the sub-editors around him proceed to the arrangement and revision of the other matters which are to form the paper. As a general rule there are pages unalterably allotted to the same subjects : page 5 and if necessary page 6 to telegraphic foreign news, page 9 to leading articles and court news, and page 1 to births, marriages, and deaths.

Social landmarks are so defined in England that you must have a certain status to allow yourself to publish a birth, marriage, or death, just as you would lose caste if while entitled to do so you inserted them in another paper.

Certain advertisements which appeared in what was called, I do not know why, the "Agony Column," and which were so long a source of amusement, have disappeared from the *Times*; but the comic never loses its rights and if the mysterious messages have disappeared you may now read at the foot of the deaths the following advertisement which is more lugubriously burlesque than anything that could be found in the little confidential messages from Darling to Darling :

"The Largest and most beautiful CEMETERY in Europe is the LONDON NECROPOLIS. All are recommended to inspect it before depositing their dead in the over-crowded and seething London cemeteries."

This Agony Column moreover rendered a service which is not suspected

to those whom the siege of Paris had separated, for it was by insertions in the columns of the *Times* that the majority of those outside Paris and abroad forwarded tidings to the besieged, to whom Mr. Washburn, who received the *Times* at Paris, communicated them.

Page 5 has become of exceptional importance since May 4th, 1874. From that date the *Times* has received its continental letters only by wire. At Paris the *Times* has a special wire exclusively belonging to it from 9 p.m. till 3 a.m., going from the Bourse to the *Times* office itself. Berlin and Vienna have also daily special wires. All the other great European centres have a wire by the hour, but without fixed time. Philadelphia and Calcutta have it on certain days, and collect and transmit direct, American and Indian news.

In one of the rooms of the *Times* office there is a telegraphic apparatus by which stands an operator, and as the blue tape of the apparatus unwinds, this *employé* dictates the telegrams to compositors who set it up immediately by composing machines and every quarter of an hour send the telegram in proof to the editor or assistant editor.

For the leading articles, as well as for the telegrams from abroad, a quarter past 2 a.m. is the usual limit. I have, however, on great occasions, known telegrams sent from Paris by special wire at 2.45 a.m. start at 5 a.m. in the first edition for Birmingham, Liverpool, Edinburgh, or Manchester.

Ever since it existed not only has the *Times* never failed to appear for a single day, but it has never been late by a minute. When it does not arrive at the proper hour on the continent it is because the English train has missed the boat or because the boat has missed the French train.

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The big endless roll of paper placed on one side of the machine comes out ready folded at the opposite end. At 4.15 a.m. the carts of the firm of Smith and Sons, who are the English Hachette, and whose head is at present First Lord of the Treasury, arrive opposite a bay-window looking out on the street and carry off the issue.

The quality of its paper, which is one of the chief points of the journal, and makes it look so respectable, easy to read, this splendid paper, which is the triumph of art and which the *Times* could not alter without inconvenience and without exciting the warmest protests, detracts greatly from its diffusion on the continent.

It is on account of this paper that the price of the *Times* is two-thirds dearer, so that it costs its readers an annual outlay of 150 francs. The weight of the paper in fact exceeds the regular weight fixed by international conventions for the conveyance of newspapers, and the excess of postage, which is more than 15 centimes, falls on the purchasers or subscribers on the continent. The quality of this paper and its solidity are what enable each copy of the *Times* to circulate in hundreds of hands, and if in the morning you take a train going to or coming from London out of the eight or ten English passengers filling the compartment you will only see two who read the *Times*, but on leaving the carriage these are the only two readers who, after reading their paper, carefully fold it and take it away, whereas the others leave theirs on the seat.

I should note in passing, to close this long chapter of printing machine experiments and the laborious and costly improvements which have been effected, that not merely does the *Times* make its own machines but it sells them to other papers, so true is it that the diffusion and progress of printing have always been among the objects which the *Times* has deemed itself bound to pursue. Thus the *Daily News* has six, thus the *New York Times*, the *Scotsman*, the *Glasgow News*, the *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna, the *Missouri Republican*, and the *Magdeburger Zeitung* use machines made at the *Times* office, not to speak of others or of those at work in its own printing office, which may give an idea of the extension taken by the construction of Walter presses in the premises of the paper.

Of late years great progress has been effected in type composing and distributing. For a long time machines were used which composed and distributed mechanically. This was a great improvement, but for some time the managers of the *Times* have had a much more radical and expeditious system, which increases the excellence of the printing. Instead

of distributing the type they every day when the working is finished throw the characters in a mass into the crucible, cast the quantity of new characters they require, and thus print every day with new type. This I think is the last stage of progress.

One of the reasons why the *Times* is free to make all the improvements it chooses to introduce in its office, whereas no other paper can imitate it in this respect, is that it is exempt from the tyranny of Trades-Unions, which prohibit for instance the use of composing machines. Here as elsewhere the *Times* has insisted on being its own master, and having never agreed to be at anybody's service it has not chosen either to be under Trades-Unions. Its hands are independent of any society, and the high wages they receive amply compensate them for the alleged benefits of most provident institutions, which make the industrious workman the involuntary providence of laziness.

I have stated how the composition of leading articles and telegrams is carried on.

When Parliament is sitting the matter is more complicated. The full report of parliamentary debates is one of the chief causes of the superiority of the *Times*. In its columns are found the full and correct reports of debates given in France only by the *Journal officiel*.

In the House of Commons and House of Lords the *Times* has a staff of sixteen shorthand writers under the immediate direction of one who regulates the work and writes the summary of the debates appearing above the leading articles. These shorthand writers relieve each other every quarter of an hour, take down the speeches and then go to the telephone, which is directly connected with the *Times* printing office. There each telephone leads as it were to the ears of a compositor, on whose head the telephonic apparatus is fixed, and whom a special contrivance, the antiphone, isolates from every other sound. This compositor is seated before a composing machine, and at the dictation of the telephone from Westminster he sets up the speeches and incidents of the Houses as they are delivered or occur, and communicates them every quarter of an hour in first proof to the editor.

The editor forms an opinion on the debates, and gives an outline to





the leader writer who criticises them. Ten minutes after the sitting ends there are the corrected proofs at the *Times*, and at 5 o'clock, although the sittings often last till a late hour at night, the reader of the *Times* finds in his paper a full report, a summary of the sitting, and one or more leading articles criticising it.

For thirty-two years Mr. John Delane reached his office at 10.30 p.m. and left at 4 a.m. just when the first printed copy issued from the press, and neither he nor his successors ever sent the paper to press without glancing over the immense sheet edited by them. About 3 a.m. the maker-up stated the amount of matter, and Mr. Delane, without looking at this mass of 100 columns, indicated from memory what had to be cut out or added to, paragraph by paragraph and almost line by line. At 4 o'clock he went home, took a light supper, went to bed and rose about noon. He lunched about 1 p.m., dispatched his correspondence, received calls, went out about 4 for a ride on horseback, went to his club, dressed for dinner, dined nine times out of ten at the club or in town, took a glance at what there was to see, and wherever he might be took leave at a quarter past 10 and went to his office. I go into all these details to show at what cost a man can aspire to the honour of editing the *Times*.

For thirty-two years his masterly brain and high authority were felt in the affairs of the whole world without his ever himself writing a line in the paper. The only opinions which he consulted and listened to were those of Mr. John Walter II and Mr. John Walter III, to whom he was attached by close friendship and a deference which never failed. He had a knack of assimilating all subjects which was almost marvellous, a rapidity of insight which was never found lacking, and a clearness of view which imposed his judgment on the most refractory.

Only once did he deviate from his coolness and personal silence, viz. by imprudently engaging in an exchange of letters with Cobden respecting a speech by Bright, and by being drawn into a controversy which the *Times* had eventually to publish, and at the foot of which figured in plain letters the name of Delane.

There was an outburst of public opinion against the unfortunate editor,

who was never forgiven in England for his infraction, without precedent and without imitation, of an absolute and till then absolutely respected law. Anonymity, indeed, is one of the forces and one of the obligations of English journalism, and I think its abandonment in France is not calculated to induce the English to imitate it.

Mr. John Delane died in 1877, and his death would have caused real consternation if he had not survived himself, and if for some time that lofty and fine intelligence had not paid tribute to nature by being enfeebled before it was entirely extinguished, exhausted by the superhuman labour of nearly a whole life.

He had been so conspicuous, so much extolled by the public, that when he disappeared the *Times* was thought to be imperilled. Nothing of the kind, and it was then perceived that John Walter III, who had been the William I of this Bismarck of journalism, had not ceased in the voluntary effacement he maintained, to hold the entire *Times* in his firm and prudent hands. The paper scarcely underwent any oscillations, like a ship whose mast is carried away by a squall and then, set right by a vigorous turn of the helm by the vigilant pilot, resumes its onward course. I have some hesitation in drawing from the shade which he loves this respected pilot, whose profound and Christian modesty is the least of his virtues.

Mr. John Walter III sat for many years in Parliament, exerting a salutary influence around him and never rising except to deliver speeches whose common sense, sincerity, and maturity of thought never failed to produce a marked effect.

He is a man who has a strong liking for France, notwithstanding the unbiassed judgment he passes on it, and who knows it better even than most Frenchmen. His greatest pleasure is to travel about this country in all directions, with the modest simplicity of a curious and cultivated tourist. He is moreover an indefatigable walker, and the best walkers have difficulty in keeping up with him.

He has, like all the Walters, a rare spirit of organisation, and he himself sketched the plans of Printing House Square, his Upper Grosvenor Street house, and his seat at Bearwood, the ground floor of which can hold

three thousand guests, and all the materials of which were taken from and prepared on the large and fine estate at Bearwood itself. Besides its famous conservatories, its large lake, its outbuildings, its horticultural productions, and its shooting, Bearwood contains a choice collection of pictures, among which is a Ruysdael, one of the finest, if not the finest in existence.

Mr. John Walter retired a few years ago from public life, but were it allowable to follow him in the laborious and beneficent obscurity which he loves, it would be seen to what degree a man entirely devoted to his duty, his family, and his neighbours can become worthy of the God whose creature he is and whose laws he strives to follow.

BLOWITZ.

(To be continued.)





ROUND THE SALON OF 1888



The annual exhibition of works of art in the Palais de l'Industrie has become as much of a social necessity among fashionable folks as the great sporting event which makes way for it in the Parisian calendar. It has established itself as an institution, and defies the caprice that has shorn our hats of their brims and even threatens lawn-tennis itself.

Of course, like all pleasures that are open to the multitude, the delights of a picture exhibition can only be fully enjoyed when we taste them before the vast majority of our fellow-citizens! Hence the great attrac-

tion exercised by "varnishing day" in by-gone times, when invitations were hard to get, and only a select few were admitted to the contemplation of belated painters, perched on ladders, heedless of the hubbub below, eye and hand intent on last touches—or shall I say, on the last

toilette of the condemned criminal? But in this age of ours, "varnishing day" has been invaded by the many to be deserted by the few. The exclusiveness underlying our pretence of a democratic society becomes more and more exacting, and now happy is the being who, a week before the show opens to the public, can airily remark, in club or drawing-room :

"I went to the Salon to-day with an important member of the Jury. A great favour! There were only ten of us in the place. If it hadn't been for the curators I could easily have carried off the future 'médaille d'honneur,' under my arm. That's really the only way to see the pictures. It was delightful."

But over and above the pleasure of having seen and been seen before the vulgar herd, there are many minor joys connected with the Salon not less alluring to the true Parisian mind. How delightful it is, for instance, that the Show should be in such a perfect situation, in the very centre of all refinement, as the "High-life" journals put it. Transfer the locale to the Barrière du Trône, to the plebian site of the ginger-bread fair, and the authorities would never hear the end of it; or perhaps, more dreadful still, we should cease to hear of a Salon at all! But the Palais de l'Industrie is the perfection of a rallying-ground. It is on the road to everywhere! Before she goes in, Madame can deposit Baby in a goat-carriage in the Champs-Élysées, under the charge of "Miss" or "Fraulein."

Five minutes after coming out she can be sparkling in the thick of her own special "set." The Palais de l'Industrie is a point of convergence, branching off in all directions to five o'clock teas. As M. de Salvandy said of journalism, it leads to everything, if you leave it in time.

A no less striking merit on the part of the Salon is its having made up its mind to open in May. Just about that time, social obligations begin to relax somewhat of their rigour. You have got over your New Year's visits, and have established yourself afresh. Your conscience is at peace, and you feel that you have at last time for a little trifling. Who was it said that pleasure was as clearly a winter property as furs?

Can anything be more amusing to a fair Parisian of early habits—and they all become early as the days lengthen—than the walk by the Avenue des Champs-Élysées to the Palais de l'Industrie, on a May morning?—the sun shining brilliantly, and she herself tripping along in the neatest of tailor-made costumes, returning the greetings of the friends, male or female, she meets on their morning ride towards La Potinière, or taking a serious “constitutional,” pedometer in pocket.

With what a malicious smile of recognition does she disconcert some prodigal brother or cousin, returning from a night at the club that has been prolonged into broad daylight, ashamed of his white tie, furious at his bad luck, and making futile efforts to hide himself in the corner of his cab.

With what pleasure does she presently glide under the great arched portico of the “Palais!” How valiantly does she toil through as many rooms as she can possibly manage, to escape the humiliation of having to say on her return: “Ah! I didn’t see the picture you describe! How could I have missed it?”

Then with what pleasant weariness does she sink into the carriage that bears her homewards. For of course, she owes it to herself to drive home. After so much walking, indoors and out, she has every right to feel tired; besides, there would be a sort of affectation of singularity in marching along in the middle of the day with the red-bound book under one’s arm, like an Englishwoman or a governess.

* * *

But, between ourselves, the true complement of a morning wander in the Salon is the *déjeuner* at the restaurant. The same Providence which has placed streams of water in the vicinity of large towns, has put Ledoyen’s salmon-trout and green sauce, side by side with the “still-life” of Gilbert and Bergeret. Ledoyen’s *truite saumonée à la sauce verte* dates back as far as the defunct cannon of the Palais-Royal, and has made even more noise in the world.

I have heard how Ledoyen the first—to whose master-mind occurred

A. AUBLET



AUTOUR D'UNE PARTITION

SALON DE 1888



the genial inspiration by which hundreds of guests are offered every day, at the same hour, the same pink fish with its garnish of green—found it necessary to supply the demands on his *menu*, by rearing trout on a large scale. To this end, he bought an immense fish pond in a quiet corner of the country. Later, going on from strength to strength, thanks to the profits of his speculation, he successively added a country-house, a park, and finally many acres of shooting, to his fish pond. I am inclined to believe that the latest addition was a lake of *sauce verte*!

However this may be, Ledoyen's salmon-trout has become such a feature of his house that to regular customers the waiters have left off naming the dish, and simply ask :

"Will Monsieur take some?"

Also, if you are ordering your meal (try the experiment for yourself to-morrow), you need merely utter these simple words :

"Don't give me any."

The waiter will understand, and the hallowed portion will be placed on another table.

Laurent's and *les Ambassadeurs* are, after Ledoyen's, the restaurants most haunted by the spirits of the Salon. It is not for me to say whether or no they deserve all the laurels they don't put into their sauces, but I can vouch for the fact that they are generally overflowing with visitors in the first days of the Salon, when the weather is at all gracious.

So much so, that about one o'clock, hungry new-comers cannot get even the leg of a fowl or a slice of cold beef for love or money. Such artists as venture in at that unlucky hour give yet another occasion to the *bourgeois* seated at his ease, with his food before him, to call them starvelings. As to the landlords of these three places of refreshment, I think there are lots in life less to be envied than theirs. Keen men of business, they must reap golden harvests in the first month of the Salon. If, as I am told, one of them is making a private collection of pictures, the gratitude he is bound to feel towards the artist race, ought to have a notable influence on his transactions.

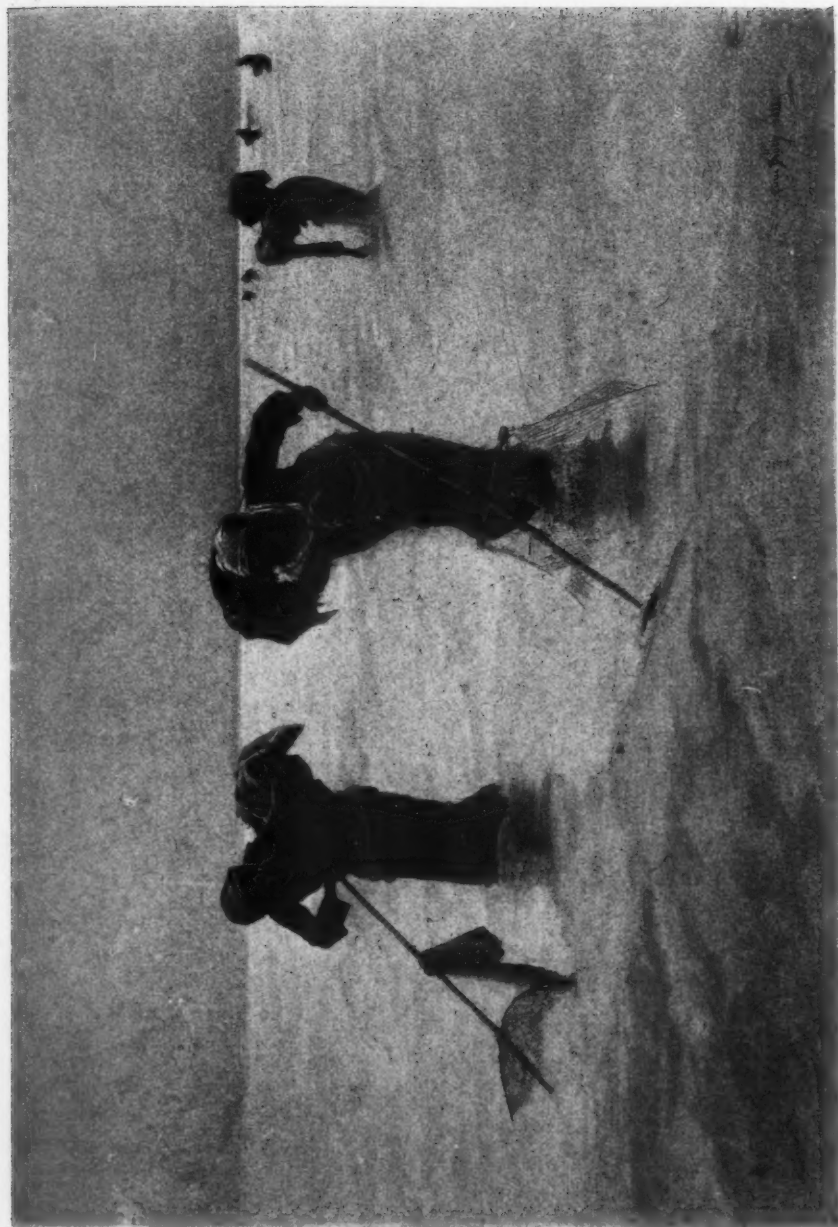
But there are other visitors to the Salon—conscientious sight-seers, who take a hasty *déjeuner* at the buffet in the garden. For them, the show is a serious business, to which they must give such undivided attention as is compatible with the weakness of the flesh. Besides they have been told that the buffet is chiefly used by artists, and they like to sit at the next table to some painter or sculptor famed in society for the audacity of his wit. Nine times out of ten, their expectations are doomed to disappointment. Artists at the Salon have other things to think of than the making of *bons-mots* for their neighbours' amusement, and, seated before a lobster, or a dish of asparagus, their remarks are not such as to make those excellent eatables hop on their plates.

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But to continue. A considerable number of Parisians, as we have seen, go to the Salon because it is the fashion, because it is pleasantly placed, because it opens in the spring, or because it is the right thing to *déjeuner* afterwards at the restaurant. Four sufficiently weighty reasons. But there is yet a fifth, which is not to be altogether ignored. A certain proportion of our contemporaries go to the Salon because of the pictures, or, to be quite precise, because of some of the pictures. For do not let me be misunderstood. I don't mean that even a small minority of enlightened amateurs has any wish to devour the whole three or four thousand works of art in the catalogue. The endless round in search of budding or blossoming talent is a severe trial to the critic himself, and cannot fail to be a weariness of the flesh to the laity. But the Salon has resources for the man or woman of the world who admires pictures without having been trained to appreciate vast battle-pieces, or pages from saintly or secular history, such works, in fact, as are commonly called machines. He or she can always take refuge in two classes of subjects more easy of comprehension, in genre pictures and portraits.

Let us follow (as many do at the Salon) some leader of fashion, passing with her nose in the air, on her rapid round, anxious to get a general idea of the show. We shall invariably find her hasty course arrested

P. BILLET



PÊCHEUSES DE CREVETTES

SALON DE 1888



by some genre picture of a sufficiently sentimental, domestic kind. A handsome lover making his declaration in a modern drawing-room, a maiden plucking the petals of the classic daisy, and shewing by her pensive mien that the oracle has answered "not at all;" a grandmother in spectacles, listening to the reading of a young girl, whose attention is suddenly distracted by the apparition of a gay cavalier at the half-open door; such are the homely subjects dear to that strange Parisienne, who, by some mysterious inconsistency, patronizes the most audaciously "modern" things in literature. If, with its pretty triviality, the picture manages to combine a moral of some sort, it is sure of unlimited feminine suffrages.

Not that this phenomenon is peculiar to Paris. My readers will remember a picture that appeared at the Salon a few years ago, called "The Two Sisters."

The subject was an honest workwoman brandishing her fingers at a bold-looking girl in a carriage on the Boulevard before the Madeleine. In the fore-ground the *ouvrière's* husband trudges beside her, a child on one shoulder, and a pick-axe on the other. Sensitive souls seized the artist's meaning at once, and reconstructed the whole story. The smart lady who had strayed from the path of virtue was sister to the honest but angry girl in cap and apron, and the shaken fist was caused by the family shame.

There were solid artistic merits in the work, but it cannot be denied that these counted for little in the admiration it excited. This was due partly to the satisfaction felt in working out the parable, partly to acquiescence in its homily of moral retribution. To fair Britons and Americans in particular the appeal was irresistible. "The Two Sisters" journeyed through the two hemispheres, and everywhere gathered crowds before it. The artist, we are told, even now enjoys the possession of his work only in intermittent fashion. Scarcely has the popular canvas re-appeared in his studio than it is pounced upon by the agent of some fresh exhibitor, eager to offer a sight of it to yet another impatient township. But beside the moral attraction we have pointed out, the "Two Sisters" had an additional charm. To that vast section of society which knows Paris more or less, it recalls one of the most interesting features of the famous city,

the Place de la Madeleine. Thus, from pole to pole, it has the double merit of appealing not only to the virtuous instinct, but to the passion for "globe trotting."

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Between portraits and genre pictures proper, there is a mixed style of composition, partaking of the character of both, which excites a two-fold curiosity. Such are the pictures for which Madame de X. and Madame de Z. are known to have sat. We may be certain, for instance, that great interest will be felt by visitors to the forthcoming show in M. Aublet's charming picture: "Reading over the Score" (*Autour d'une partition*), which shows M. Massenet at the piano, surrounded by pretty women, one leaning forward to see, another stretching out a hand to turn the leaves. As in newspaper *feuilletons* we shall all be asking: "Whose is that hand? Whose that face?"

Two or three years ago a picture of this class, a "Hunt Ball," helped greatly towards making the fame of Mr. Stewart. When once the features of the Duc de Morny and the Vicomte de Janzé had been recognized, every one set to work to name the more confused figures in the back-ground. M. Jean Béraud has also made a speciality of these painted enigmas, which the precision of his brush renders fairly easy of solution. Still, a *blasé* public contrives to add to its interest by betting on the doubtful identities.

In all ages—as is proved by "The Marriage in Cana"—artists have delighted in reproducing the features of the people of their world on canvas, even at the cost of anachronisms. But at no period has this fancy taken deeper root than in the present day. On all sides we hear of our most famous painters begging help from the amateur models with whom they chance to have social relations.

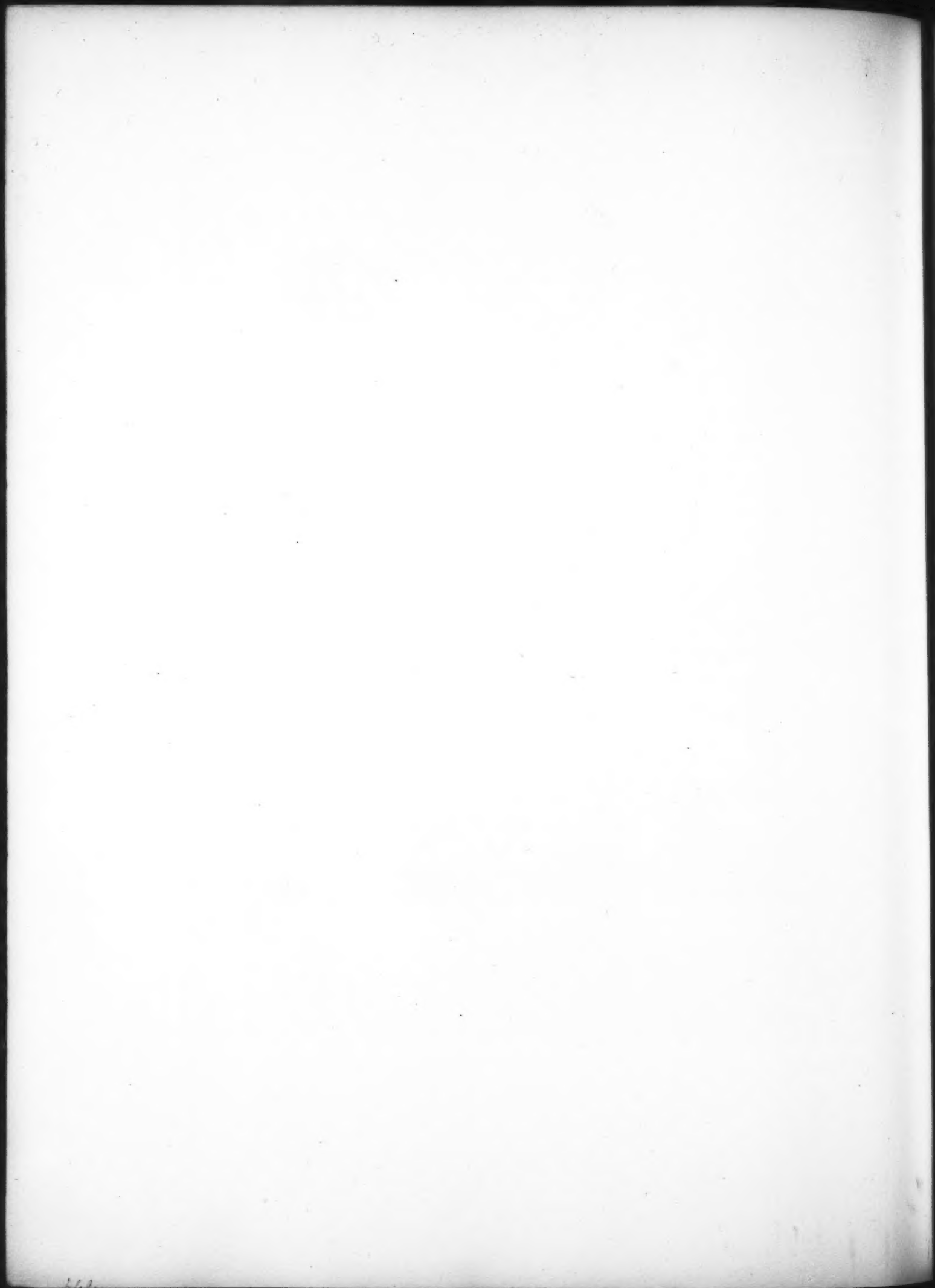
The professional sitter, the product of Montmartre or Ménilmontant, may do her best, but it is impossible for her to afford to the artist for whom she poses even a faint echo of the nameless grace of high breeding. It has often been said of plebeian womanhood that once transplanted,

L. CHALON



CIRCE

SALON DE 1888.



transferred from the maternal attic to any other centre, such as the theatre, for instance, it assimilates the tone of good society with far less difficulty than men under like conditions. There may be something in the theory, but its application is restricted. And it may be laid down as a general principle that as long as the paid model remains a model, her artistic mission lies in suggesting to the painter other notions than that of woman as a clothed animal; and that for pictures of "Society" the only satisfactory models are the women who belong to it.

Now, if an artist be very popular—and what artist is not, if he but know when to leave a timely card,—he can boldly ask leave of one of his lady friends to make some little sketch of a costume, an attitude, or even some personal detail, a hand, an ear. I have known genre painters who have been still more liberally treated. In their natural desire for truth they want to reproduce some charming interior, some cosy corner of a boudoir. What woman is not delighted to see her familiar little table, her work-box, or her secrétaire figuring on a canvas signed with a well-known name? She will even go the lengths of lending her knick-knacks to the artist that he may work more at his ease in his own studio. It is a kind of cheap Mæcenasism which hurts nobody and pleases every one.

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But in the main, at the Salon as at the *Mirlitons*, the *Aquarellistes*, the *Pastellistes*, the portraits are the most attractive features of the exhibition, especially to the feminine visitors. Speaking broadly, it may be said that a single portrait of a well-known lady, signed with some famous name, would suffice to draw a thousand spectators a day, no matter where exhibited. In the first place, as I have already said, there is the excitement of fitting a name to the personality discreetly hinted at by the initials in the catalogue.

And then what a fertile subject of conversation the work affords at afternoon receptions! "What do you think of Madame X's portrait?" "Very nice, dear, but——" "Oh, yes! I know what you mean! Those fearful hands! But that's not the *painter's* fault, you know."

"Oh! that's not what I meant. I was thinking of the feet."

"Oh! that *is* the painter's fault. He might well have lengthened her skirts!"

"He might indeed!"

"He has made her young-looking enough, hasn't he?"

"Yes, it's quite ridiculous, but it's very cleverly done, all the same. I shall get him to paint my portrait forty years hence!"

"So shall I!"

This last is the invariable feminine reflection before a successful portrait. The contemplation of Madame de X.'s or Madame de Z.'s charms suggests to her fashionable sisters an appraisal of their own. They ask themselves how the artist would have rendered their beauty, if they are beautiful, or even if they are ugly with the kind of ugliness neutralized by what is known as "style." From these first ponderings there is but one step to an absorbing desire to be painted in their turn, but one frail barrier to overleap—the will of a husband. The lord and master is often refractory at first. He recoils not merely at the big cheque he will have to draw for some famous signature; he defers his capitulation on half a dozen other pleas; the time occupied by sittings, the fear that Madame will have to neglect her social duties, and, in some cases, a dread that the portrait will figure, on its completion, in a public exhibition.

Between ourselves this last objection is not often sincere. Artists are quite aware of this, and they have one unfailing method of getting over the difficulty. They insinuate to a husband secretly willing to have his hand forced, that the publicity of such works is of extraordinary moment to themselves; it would be barbarous to condemn their very best performance to be hidden under the bushel of domestic privacy. How can a husband refuse the light of day to a masterpiece that reflects equal honour upon the artist, his wife, and himself?

As to Madame, her life is one unclouded delight from the moment she has extorted her husband's consent, until, and after, the canvas has been displayed to intimates, acquaintances, and nobodies. The very anxiety she confides to her friends as to who should be chosen for the important

EDOUARD DETAILLE



LE RÊVE

SALON DE 1889

work is pleasurable. So and so is the painter of dark beauties. Do you remember his lovely portraits of Countess Potocka, in the big cloak, of Madame Pasca, once a favourite actress at the "Gymnase," of the beautiful Madame Bisch—? Somebody else has made a speciality of blondes of every age and of all gradations of complexion, their blushing cheeks and snowy necks, their classic blend of lily and rose. A third is a pluralist, and succeeds equally well with all. Though he has exhibited more than twenty brilliant brunettes, is he not the author of the blonde Countess V.'s portrait, a portrait which gained him the coveted *médaille d'honneur*? Lastly—and the Salon itself can bear eloquent testimony on this inexhaustible theme—there are the painters who excel in the art of gracefully presenting the remains of by-gone beauty, and those who bring a skilful brush to the treatment more particularly, either of ethereal or buxom charms. One artist is more at home with a slender sitter, the other with one whose plumpness overflows. The first has the genius of artistic expansion, the second of artistic contraction. The one has a touch of the cattle-breeder, the other of Mr. Banting!

At last the important point is decided. After long reflection, the painter has been chosen. At some social gathering, an introduction has been brought about, and the husband has been despatched to arrange for sittings. But now a fresh problem arises. What shall she be painted in? One thing is quite certain. However great an authority the painter may be on costume, however excellent the advice of experienced friends, nine times out of ten, Madame will please herself. And unfortunately, she herself is about the last person she ought to please. A woman has a natural inclination to believe that she looks her best in her smartest gown. Madame, left to her own devices, is disposed to array herself for her sittings in the dress that was pronounced so becoming at the Embassy ball a few nights back. Short-sighted beauty! You forget that a portrait is no ephemeral record, that its glory will, we hope, survive in ages yet to come, that the Bonnat or Carolus-Duran of to-day, will be the Rembrandt or Velasquez of to-morrow! In the lightness of your heart, you propose to handicap a work destined, perhaps, to a glorious immortality, with the extravagances of a fleeting fashion, a fashion which to-morrow

you yourself will ridicule as antiquated and absurd. Wait for fifteen years; your daughter, now trundling her hoop, will be a bride, attired in the fashion of 1903. Before the re-exhibited portrait she will stand and cry :

"What frights you all must have looked in those days, Mamma. So in 1888 people dragged all their hair up to the tops of their heads, and wore their dresses flat, without any bustles! How funny!" "Baby," in fact, will laugh at you.

Madame, I pray you, give no such occasion for jibes. To this end, avoid dresses that seem delightful at the moment, but which will have the terrible drawback of "dating" your portrait.

A slight digression may bring this point home. About ten years ago, one of the annual *revues* at the *Mirlitons*, was an illustration of changes that had taken place in fashion in the course of twelve months. Now you will remember, ladies, that ten years ago, in 1878, the rage for what have been described as "pillow-case" gowns was at its height. Fat or thin, you all hastened to array yourselves in these close-clinging, glove-like garments. There were two weighty reasons for your infatuation. In the first place, this all-revealing tightness of fit was the fashion; in the second, it gave an easy triumph to well-made women. Stout or skinny, their less favoured sisters followed suit.

It is evident, of course, that one object of the authors was to show a lady in a "pillow-case" gown, but there was much consultation among them as to how they might provide some piquant "argument" for their play.

A happy inspiration flashed upon the petty parliament, known as the "Commission de Littérature." The symposium determined to be guided by that law of antithesis, so dear to Victor Hugo, and to represent the two most monstrous contrasts that costume has ever offered, from the days when clothing was almost inappreciable, down to our own times. They resolved to set the "pillow-case" gown side by side with the crinoline, the original crinoline of 1860. An artist member of the club, M. Lew—Br—undertook to give form to the idea. He hastily sketched out two enormous canvases, the details of which could be seen from every part

WALTER GAY



UN ASILE

SALON DE 1888



of the house. On the left was a young and lovely lady in balloon skirts; on the right another, equally young and equally lovely, in a gown like a strait-waistcoat.

There was a universal shout of laughter in the little theatre of the Place Vendôme, on the day of the performance. All the crinoline beauties of 1860 were there, the goddesses of the third Napoleon's Court, whose memorable charms, as a lately published book bears witness, left admiring recollections even in the heart of Von Moltke himself. This bevy of fair critics, uneclipsed, it must be allowed, by the after generation, imperial in their summer as they were exquisite in their spring, stood aghast at the sight of fashions they had once patronized: "What!" said one aloud; "were we really as ugly as that!"

No, dear lady, neither you, nor, to descend a rung or two on the social ladder, the young actresses for whom the school-boys of your day sighed, were ugly, although wearing crinolines. Our admiration for you rose superior even to the dreadful balloons in which you cased yourselves, just as, in later times, we condoned the monstrosities you called "improvers." But confess that it would have been a mistake to have had your portrait painted in a crinoline, even in 1860. I can well believe a story I have heard concerning one of your most charming contemporaries. I am told that after that evening at the *Mirlitons revue*, she took all the photographs of herself out of her album, and burnt them, suddenly convinced that she had been shamefully libelled. With those of her friends she remained content!

Generally speaking, women who wish to avoid a "dated" costume, will do well to be painted in a low dress, unless they happen to be too ethereally slender. It seems likely that a bare arm and shoulder will be quite as fashionable a hundred years hence, as under the Valois, or Louis XV, or in our own day, and so, how can a lady do better than hand down to her great-grand-children, some such record of her shapeliness?

As to tints, white is the most becoming for a youthful portrait. A cloud of white tulle, for instance, runs very little risk of ever looking *rococo*. If the sitter be elderly, or even at her meridian, we venture

to counsel dark velvet, black, red, or blue, very simply draped, and a fur mantle half falling from the shoulders.

Another rock on which the fair sitter is often stranded is the choice of jewels.

At the last "Salon des Mirlitons," I noted many cases in which a little more reticence in the display of diamonds (family or not) would have been better. In one single head of hair, I counted six crescents. This rage for ornaments is a fatal mistake. The true richness of a toilette is not enhanced by upsetting a jewel-case over it. Ladies who thus adorn themselves for their portraits, have, however, one excuse; diamonds are not likely to go out of fashion. But what is to be said of those reckless spirits, who hang themselves with bangles, and cats-eyes, and other such gimcracks of a fleeting vogue? Have they forgotten that those stout dames in gowns fastened at the throat with huge brooches, containing the miniature of some Arthur or Oscar—those portraits of their youth that they recall with a shudder—were once looked upon as the pink of fashion?

To escape the difficulties of modern clothes, many women are now painted in fancy dress. Madame feels assured that her costume for the last Carnival, or Mid-Lent ball, *must* suit her. She was not obliged to fight a battle with her dress-maker in the choice of it. She was not forced to resign herself as on ordinary occasions, to a dress whose only merit is that it bears the sign-manual of 1888. She had been free to glean just what suited her best in the great store-room of centuries. Therefore why should she hesitate? She was delicious—her mother and husband were agreed—as Marie de Médicis, as a Pompadour shepherdess, as a pink Pierrette. Bring out from the great wardrobe the dear bravery that made her so happy for a whole night, and let her taste once more the joys of that transient metamorphosis. The charms of disguise may be prolonged indefinitely. All the time she is sitting, she is again the beautiful, legendary lady, or the stately sovereign of the cotillon. And later, in those trying hours when she feels that her wrinkles, and the ages of her children can no longer be ignored, the portrait will be there for consolation. Hanging, not perhaps in her

J. L. CÉROME

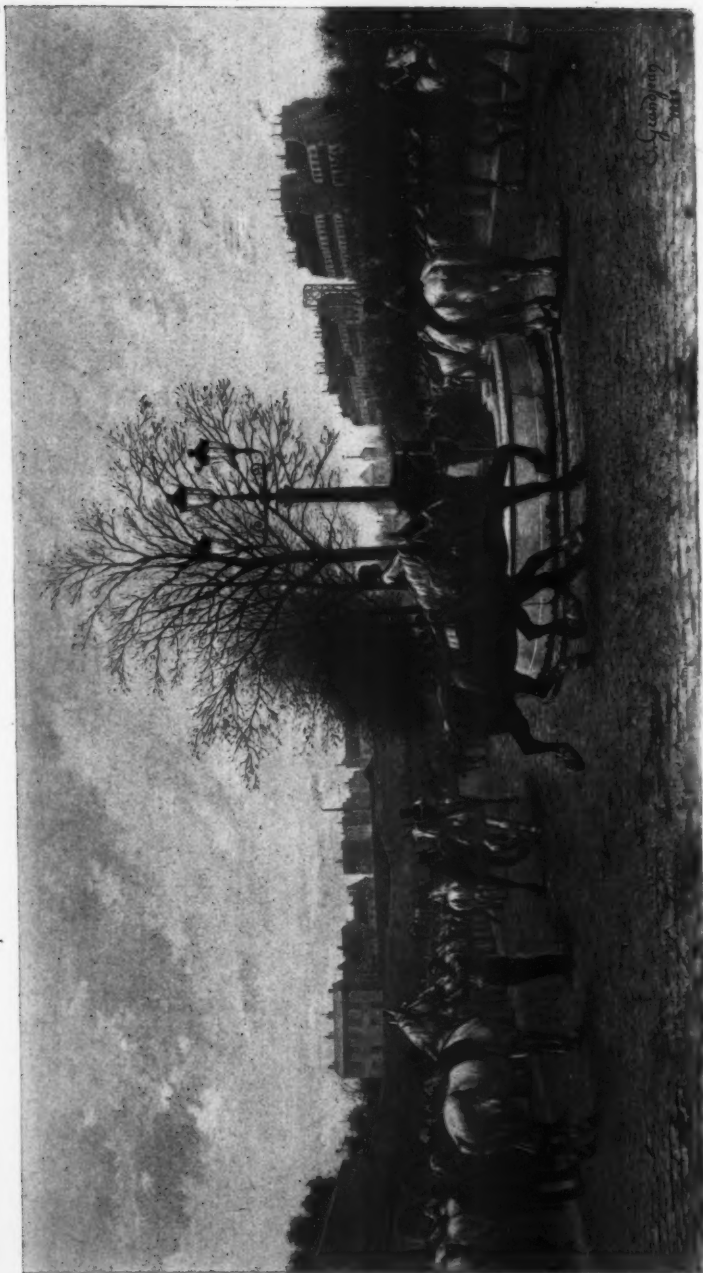


LE POÈTE TOUCHÉ PAR LA MUSE

SALON DE 1888

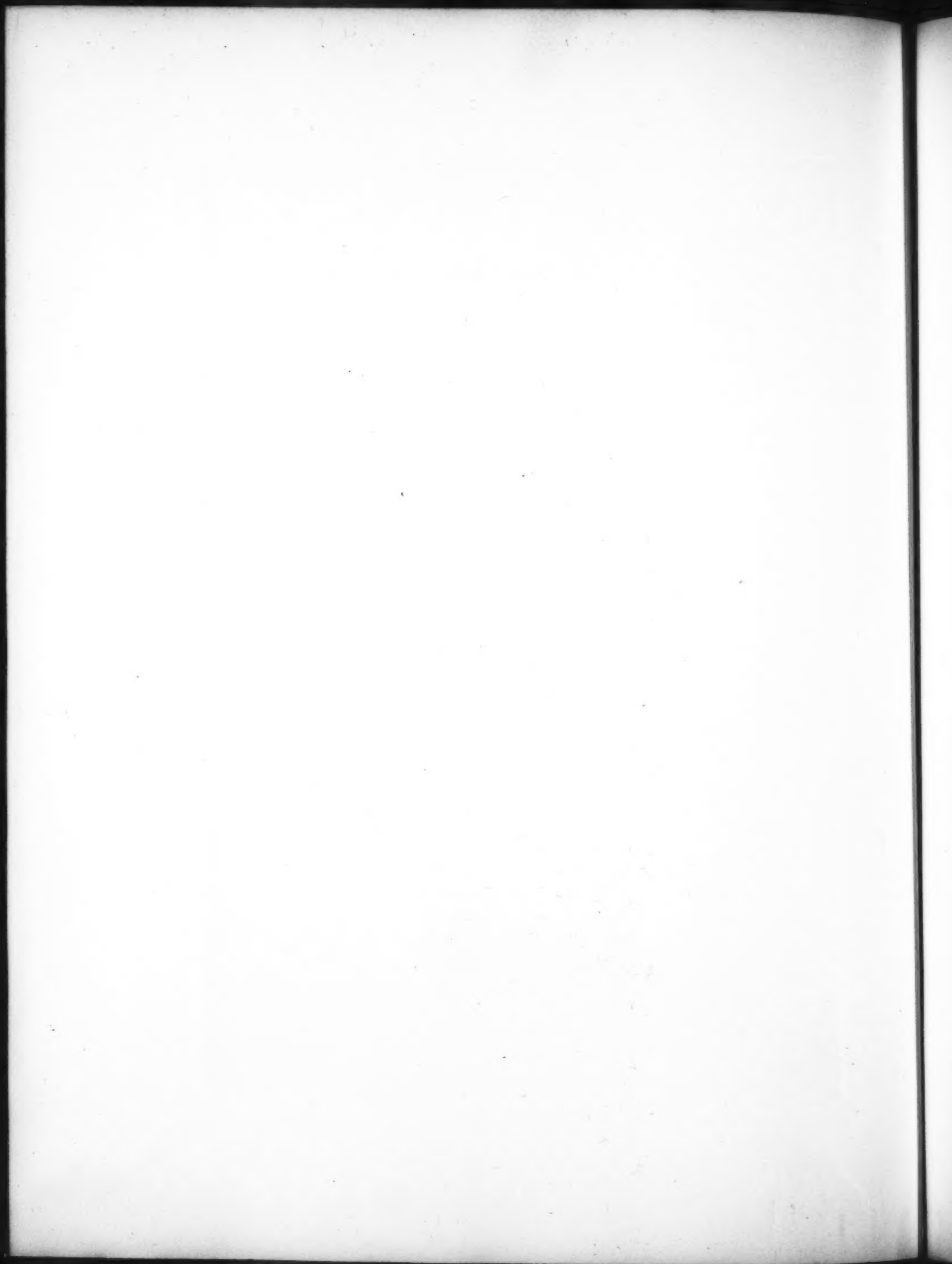


E. C. GRANDJEAN



LE MARCHÉ AUX CHEVAUX DE PARIS

MAISON DE 1848



drawing-room, but in all the cosy elegance of her boudoir, the canvas is a perpetual spell, conjuring up the moment when her beauty was at its zenith, heightened by the cunning of a hand that had culled the graces of every age, and set in the charming frame of that motley scene, surrounded by a whirl of youth and light-hearted gaiety.

Round this idea of sitting for a portrait in fancy dress, there clings, as it were, a scent of *poudre à la maréchale*. About two years ago, after a ball given by Madame la Vicomtesse de Courv—, several ladies met together, and made a plan. They had all been enchanted with their costumes, the elaboration of which had cost them unheard of anxiety and research; visits to the Louvre, to the print-rooms of Museums, and many confabs with be-spectacled fossils. It was unanimously agreed at the meeting, that each lady present should have her portrait painted in water-colours, in this Courv— costume. Then it was resolved to appoint a painter by ballot. M. Jacquet was elected by an imposing majority.

A fancy dress portrait is further justified in these days by the leaning of fashion itself to historic revivals. We hear of "Greek" dresses, and "Empire" dresses. The dressing, or undressing, of a lady, is a study in chronology, ancient and modern.

The costume of the stronger sex is no less beset with difficulties. It behoves even the male sitter to make careful choice of the garb in which the painter is to present him to posterity. Let him beware of frock-coat or shooting-jacket of ultra fashionable cut. Let him not be beguiled by the splendour and variety of his cravats; ten years hence his scarves and sailor knots may look as curious as the spotted waistcoats of the *Juste-Milieu*.

Young or old, I counsel him to strive after the utmost simplicity, not to say insignificance, in his attire. A turned down collar, and a plainly knotted silk tie, surmounting a coat of non-aggressive cut, neither very high nor very low at the throat, make up a whole that may be safely trusted not to date a portrait too sharply. Fancy dress is in the worst possible taste for male portraits. Nothing in this direction is admissible except the "pink" of a hunting man, which may be worn without any

suspicion of pretension. But any other approach to travesty will draw down a hail of criticism. The sitter is set down as eager to display some personal point, either of face or figure, to the best advantage, and is ridiculed for his affectation. Why should he wish *his* portrait to be other than yours or mine?

Here soldiers have great advantages. Their uniforms do not become old-fashioned, like the last cut in waistcoats. Now, in these days everybody is, or has been, more or less a warrior, and no one outside the Chamber of Deputies will object to seeing the one-year volunteers figuring in paint.

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We see then that the exhibition in the Palais de l'Industrie ought not to be a Clothes Show, at least on the canvases. For the visitors it is not merely a privilege, it is positively a duty, to be dressed in the purest taste of the moment. I say duty advisedly. For the Salon is necessarily a sort of "first night," a solemn inauguration of spring toilettes. How can a lady who respects herself, appear in a last year's gown, or even in a costume already familiar to her friends, under the pitiless brightness of a May morning? Kindred considerations in nine cases out of ten, make her fasten a little veil over her face.

This burst of Spring fashions lends yet another charm to the Show for a notable portion of the public. A really clever costume is sure to fix the attention of dilettanti of both sexes. To their minds a combination at once novel and harmonious is itself not unworthy of a place in the catalogue. They almost expect the light to be arranged with as much regard for good millinery, as for good pictures.

Not that much actual splendour is to be looked for among the visitors. It has already been pointed out that the note of the present day as regards dress is an affectation of simplicity in the streets, in public places, in short, at all points of contact with the multitude. Black is the prevailing colour. The magnificence of brocades and embroideries is reserved for intimate circles. Madame apes the *grisette* out of doors, and shines forth as the great lady only among her kind.

Even on the fashionable Friday—for the Salon has its day, like the Théâtre-Français, the Eden, the Hippodrome, the Cirque, the Chat Noir, to say nothing of the Séraphin for Baby—it is an understood thing that nothing very rich is to be worn. Many a *rastaquouère*, eager to gaze his fill at Parisian elegance in all its splendour, has gone away woefully disappointed. He has lingered under the dome to witness the arrival of some stately dowager. He has seen the great lady drive up in her victoria, with powdered footman, and step out in a costume no smarter than that of an ordinary lady's maid.

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Was it some author who had been hissed, that first exclaimed : "How many fools does it take to make a public?" At any rate, it was a wise man. Artists in general are, however, less sweeping in their estimate of the critical sense possessed by the Parisians who pass before their canvases. The boldest content themselves by asserting, *mezza voce*, that they recognize no tribunal but that of their peers. Yet in spite of this, very many of them, especially the younger ones, take a lively interest in the non-professional verdict. How few among them can resist the temptation of slipping behind a group planted in front of their pictures, and listening to its judgment on their work. It is true, that, after a time, they form no very high opinion of the critical capacity of their contemporaries, and in the evening at their clubs and *cafés*, they crack endless jokes at the expense of the would-be connoisseurs.

There are so many varieties of the art-imposter, that they furnish a complete gallery of types : types that might well sadden the soul of the artist, were he not, as a rule, of a temperament little prone to melancholy. Painters are often laughed at in these days for posing as plain citizens. But what shall we say of the plain citizens who pose as professors of art?

Let us join that group which has gathered before some sensational picture. The gentleman before you, holding forth at the top of his voice, has his own peculiar methods of acquiring a knowledge of art.

He laid in a stock of information last night at some Art Club; or a month or two ago, he got a friend to introduce him into the studio of the painter who was then working on the canvas now attracting so much attention. By industrious gleanings in likely quarters, he has made up his little bundle of information. He knows the name of the fair and virtuous lady who sat for the great toe; he knows where the painter buys his chrome yellow; he knows, too, the price that some American millionaire has offered for the picture. He knows, in fact, everything about the work, except its artistic value. But this is a mere detail, and he gets a reputation for connoisseurship at a very cheap rate. His only outlay in the matter has been the annual subscription to the club, and the "two hours" he paid the cabman who waited at the door while he pestered the unhappy painter with his absurd questions.

Another goes a step or two farther, and dashes boldly in among the intricacies of *technique*. Vermilion and emerald green are as household words on his tongue. He talks glibly of glazes, and varnishes. A third has a simple and invariable formula. If the painter has introduced a bare arm or leg into his picture, he points out that the limb is either too long or too short.

"Just look at that! Did you ever see an arm or a leg like that? All out of drawing!"

And he adds judicially :

"Isn't it odd that a fellow whose business it is should make such a mess of it as that?"

Reading between the lines of which, we may gather :

"If I, a mere amateur, can thus detect the blunders of the trade, what an artist I might have been, had I not stuck to my own state in life."

There is yet another type of connoisseur who stands high in public estimation. This is the candid friend of the painter. We listen to his judgment with respect, knowing him to enjoy a close intimacy with the artist; and to shew his own perfect openness of mind, he impales his friend with Brutus-like impartiality.

G. HITCHCOCK



L'ANNONCIATION

MALIN DE 1893



"Delightful fellow, X.! The most amusing fellow in the world! He's my greatest friend. But, upon my life, he's made a muddle of it this time! All his good qualities can't make an artist of him. Pleasant, well-bred, universally liked as he is, he hasn't half the "go" of that ruffian Z. who, they say, has been cheating at Baccarat!"

How can one doubt the soundness of this verdict, delivered by a man who, so far from having any prejudice against the work, is the chosen friend of its author, and conscientious to the verge of seeming disloyal?

But of all these aspirants to critical wisdom at the Salon, he who imposes most upon the simple, he who earns the cheapest fame as a connoisseur, is the "gentleman who says nothing."

He says nothing, but how eloquent is his silence! How impressive his dumb-show! The gentleman who says nothing first of all picks out the special canvas, with which he intends to make his effect. He then glances at it sideways, without appearing to give much attention to it. Next he places himself full in front of it, and steps back to command it better. He asks pardon briefly of the persons on whose toes he steps in his retreat, and having taken up his position, gazes solemnly at the picture for two minutes, three minutes, four minutes! The length of his scrutiny is determined by the number of simpletons he sees taking note of his proceedings. He screws up his eyes, makes a telescope of his hands, walks a little further off, then rapidly approaches once more, and finally, without a word, without a gesture, he walks suddenly away, carrying with him an apparent world of thought.

He never fails to create a sensation. The simple souls who make way respectfully before him, take him for the "Ministre des Beaux-Arts," or at least for M. Barbey d'Aurévilly.

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But these are, generally speaking, the devices of consequential nobodies. The great mass of the uninitiated in art-matters, are intent on other game. For them, the atmosphere of woman is more attractive than that of fresh varnish.

At the Salon, flirtation reigns supreme. Were it to be banished from lawn-tennis, it would re-assert itself in the great galleries, where it is quite the proper thing for a lady to meet a friend by appointment—with her husband's knowledge, of course. The friend is to act as cicerone. What can be more harmless? But in these vast rooms, couples have a tendency to linger in corners—hence the popularity of many works of art that hang in the recesses—and in a *tête-à-tête* flirtation, the pictures themselves give endless points of vantage whence to order the conversation upon sentimental lines.

A lady and gentleman have just stopped before "The Poet's Dream" by Gérôme. (*Le Rêve du Poète.*) Do you suppose that he is wasting his opportunities by pointing out the masterly qualities of the work, the grandeur of the conception and execution, the perfection of detail, the charm of colour, the excellence of draughtmanship? Far from it. Some such a duet as this is going on :

"You cannot forbid me to love you without hope."

"You are really too absurd. Look at the picture."

"I have looked at it. The poet is a lucky fellow. Ah! if *you* were *my* muse!"

"Do please be quiet, and look at the picture. How well that naiad swims!"

"Not so well as you did last summer, at Dinard. I remember how nervous you made me."

"Do look at the picture, for Heaven's sake, or I will go away"

Others are more easily beguiled from their duty as sight-seers. The tempter finds allies in the subjects of innumerable canvases. This year, for instance, he will entice them by the sight of M. Kaemmerer's white-robed maiden. Their hearts will thrill in harmony with the lyre that trembles beneath her touch. Or he will lead them to the little garden nook, enclosed by a railing, in which M. Albert Aubert has painted "The Pretty Purveyor of Love," (*La Marchande d'Amour*), holding by the wing the naughty little god, who is busy gathering flowers, while another, more mutinous than he, tries to escape from his prison. What delightful allusions the subject contains for the woman who loves to laugh.





For the emotional woman, on the other hand, here is the young Dutch virgin of Mr. Hitchcock, standing with drooped eyes and hand upon her heart in a field of lilies.

Or here is the magnificent *Rêve*—the “Vision”—of M. Detaille; or the *Atelier de Couture*—“The Seamstresses”—of Mr. Walter Gay. Sewing and war, each in turn, can be useful to the clever flirt. Give him his head and he will identify himself in rotation with every subject that turns up, will apply every illustration to his own case. Before Gerôme’s “Lion in Repose,” he will expatiate on his restless nights; before Delpy’s little river (*La Rivière*), he calls it—he will boldly speak out his desire to be upon its bosom in a boat—for two—like M. Delpy’s lovers. As in *Mireille*, he becomes in turn a mass-book or a cloud, a bee or a butterfly, but oftenest a butterfly! O Art! Sacred and even austere art! Thou wilt never know the total of the lovers’ follies, the lovers’ fibs and snares, to which thou hast been all at once dragoman and passport under the glass roof of the Palais de l’Industrie!

On the other hand, thou mayest claim to be the “honest broker” of many a marriage. It is the fashion nowadays for those who wish to bring about such unions, to say to both of the parties in turn, when, perhaps, neither has seen the other :

“He—or she—will be at the Salon to-morrow; he—or she—has not the least idea that you will be there, however; of that I can give you my word!” At all which they can have a good laugh, once the wedding is over.

For these matrimonial engineerings the Salon had entirely, and justly, dethroned the Opéra-Comique, even before the fire which put an end to the latter’s existence.

From every point of view, the Salon is preferable to the theatre. It gives a fairer course for the preliminary canter. At the Salon the young woman has to stand up, to walk. The bust too long, or the legs too short, escape notice at the theatre, but now they appear in all their frank disproportions! And so, too, with complexions. The daylight which falls from the transparent roof is brutal in its sincerity, and shows much that the half-shadow of a box concealed. It sets forth, my dear

young lady, the accidents of your skin, with no more pity than it shows to the crows-feet that stain the least adorable maturity. The Salon is, in fact, a Monsieur de Foy, working in full daylight, and taking twenty sous commission.

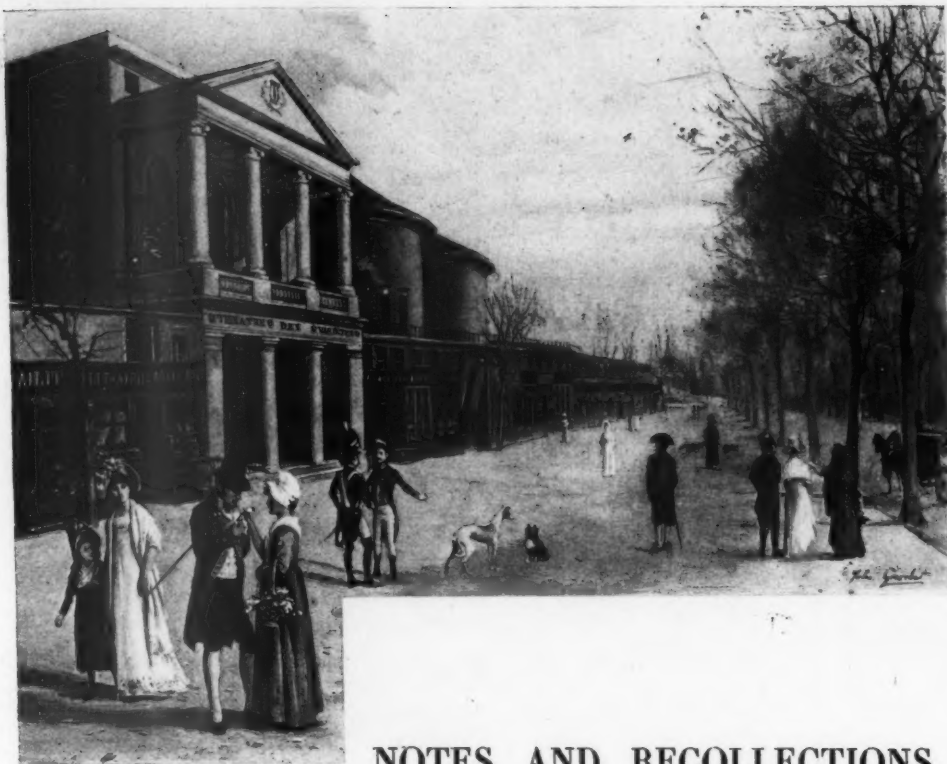
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For reasons we have described, the Salon is an attraction of the first order for all those who are "in the swim." Less than ever can we of to-day shake ourselves free of fashion, for it is not only art that is in vogue, it is artists too. They go everywhere, to all the great functions, and into all the jealous circles. M. Dimanche is their tenant, and M. Prudhomme will be saying to-morrow :

"My son is going to turn out badly, he refuses to become a painter!"

GASTON JOLLIVET.





NOTES AND RECOLLECTIONS

Saturday, the 1st of July, 1871. — On the steps of the Variétés Theatre I run against the liveliest and youngest little old man in the world. Brisk, spruce, dandyish, as neat as though he had just come out of a band-box, nut-brown cut-away coat, cane in hand, pearl-grey gloves, light cravat, a red rose in his button-hole : such is daddy Dupin. As for his age, he won't tell that, but on the stage he was Scribe's senior, and Scribe to-day would be more than eighty years old.

I have always had a great fancy for the conversation of daddy Dupin, but I never talk to him of anything but what happened long, long ago. He has now only the vaguest recollection of doings under the Monarchy of July, but he retains a very clear and precise impression of even the most insignificant dramatic and literary events of the first twenty years of the century. To-day he seems brimming over with gaiety and good-

humour—— The opportunity strikes me as a good one; now is the time to set his tongue wagging. I start with this question :

“When did you mount these steps for the first time?”

“The night the theatre was opened.”

“What year was that?”

“What year?—— I can hardly say—— I remember it was in the summer, mid-summer, under the First Empire. I kept my place in the crowd, under a blazing sun, the whole afternoon. The theatres never closed their doors in those days. Paris was as gay and full of life in summer as in winter—— People were not bitten then with the absurd mania for spending the summer in the country. You didn’t travel, or go to the sea-side, and those wretched railways that have done the theatres so much harm were not yet invented. Well, well, so the world wags! You were asking me?”

“The year the Variétés was opened.”

“It was—— let me see—— we had just received the news of a great battle——”

“What battle?”

“Ah! That I can’t say—— there were so many great battles in those times! But this I do know, that my first piece the *Voyage à Chambord* was played, for the first time, in the following year at the Vaudeville Theatre. It was about the same time that Napoleon sent for Talma to play tragedy in a little German town——”

“Erfurth?”

“Erfurth, yes, I think that was the place—— Talma played there before the Emperor of Russia—— thingamy—— what on earth was his name?”

“Alexander.”

“Quite so, Alexander. I often saw him at the play in 1814, in Paris, a splendid fellow—— Well, my first piece was played in 1808, so the Variétés must have been opened during the summer of 1807.”

In this way, through theatrical reminiscences, we got at the date of the opening of the Variétés. Daddy Dupin’s reminiscences are all theatrical. 1815 is for him not the year of the Restoration of the Bourbons, but the year of the first performance of *L’Écharpe blanche ou le retour à*

Paris, a piece of his own. 1830 is not the year of the accession of King Louis-Philippe, but the year of the first performance of *M. de la Jobardière ou la révolution impromptu*, another piece of his. Each of our political crises has served daddy Dupin as an opportunity for a "topical" vaudeville, full of "tags", songs, and musical selections. He knows only so much of our history as he has been able to string into ballads. The rest is nothing, doesn't count, doesn't exist. "So, the present building of the Variétés had just been finished."

"Ah! And the company at the Variétés, with Brunet at their head, Brunet, the great Brunet!"

He utters the name of Brunet with the most respectful admiration. He had a moment before pronounced the name of Napoleon in quite a light and off-hand way, and it was for Brunet that he reserved, without hesitation, the epithet of *great*— He went on.

"The Variétés company had been obliged to quit the theatre of La Montausier. Their vaudevilles were more successful and paid better than the tragedies at the Théâtre-Français— The Emperor issued a decree that deprived them of the Palais-Royal house— They were allowed to build a new house on the Boulevard Montmartre— a fearful neighbourhood for a theatre— It was almost the country! There was not a single one of those big houses you see now. Nothing but little stalls of one story, wretched sort of wooden booths, and Boulogne's two tiny panoramas— No pavement— the road was just of flattened earth between two rows of tall trees— A few old cabs and hackney-coaches passed from time to time. It was the country, nothing but the country!"

He repeated this word with a kind of horror! We walked to and fro on the pavement between the Rue Vivienne and the Rue Montmartre. It was the liveliest hour of the day.

"And do you remember the opening performance at the Variétés?"

He had not a moment's hesitation on that point.

"Do I remember it!— Why, as if I were there now. They played a piece by Désaugiers— Ah! Désaugiers! The *Panorama de Momus*— The whole company appeared in the piece. And what a company!

Cazot, Joly, Brunet, and Madame Cuizot, and Madame Mengozzi——”

He uttered all these names at a breath, without any lapse of memory, the man who just before had been at a loss for the name of the Emperor Alexander.

“There were lovely, very lovely women in those days, not so puny as those of to-day. There are pretty women, now, but no lovely ones! It was the wars of the Empire that impoverished the race——”

“And when did they play anything of yours for the first time at the Variétés?”

“Oh! late, very late—— it cost me some trouble to reach the Variétés—— not until 1815. A one-act play in collaboration with Scribe, *Le Bachelier de Salamanque*.”

He brought out this: “Late, very late—— not until 1815,” with a delightfully natural air.

“Scribe—— Ah! what a man! If we had a Scribe nowadays the theatre would not be in the state it is. He had only one fault; he was fond of the country—— He had bought a country house; owned farms, poultry and cattle—— And now and then he would carry me away by force to his place, at Séricourt—— At the end of twenty-four hours, I was off, I have never been able to live anywhere but on the boulevard, between the Variétés and the Théâtre Feydeau—— And I used to say to Scribe: ‘It is too bad of you to be so fond of the country—— A playwright has no right to be fond of the country. Look at Auber—— He has never wanted to leave Paris.’”

“And did you bring out many pieces at the Variétés?”

“Fifty, more or less—— and by the way, I was just taking one to Bertrand—— But he is not there—— He is at the sea-side! There is another mania for you: the sea-side! A theatrical manager at the sea-side! Yes, I was taking him that—— ’tis a dramatised anecdote. The action takes place in a harem—— there is a part in it for Dupuis as a Chief Eunuch!——”

He drew a manuscript out of his pocket. As far as that goes, I have never seen daddy Dupin for the last fifteen years without one or more manuscripts in his pockets, which he wears wide and deep, for the purpose. He shewed me his manuscript, and brandished it in the air:

"It's a piece, that is, a real piece, with situations, cross-purposes, couplets, catastrophes, a piece filled-in from a carefully drawn outline—a piece after the old method— The right sort of method, that was, and people will come back to it— they have invented a new stage-craft in these days. Well written pieces, with epigrams, and pretension to style— Epigrams! An epigram is a detestable thing in a piece. There is only one kind of cleverness for the stage : a clever situation. Scribe said to me one day : 'When my subject is a good one, when my skeleton-outline is clear and firmly drawn, I could get the piece written by my porter; he would be inspired by the situation, and the piece would be a success.' Scribe was right— He had wit and plenty of it. He too, when he liked, could hit off an epigram; but in his pieces, never. There he would have nothing but clever situations. So all his work was strictly theatrical. And so is this piece of mine for Bertrand—and that, too, is strictly theatrical."

As he said this, he tapped his left coat-pocket— His dramatised anecdote had come out of his right pocket, and in his left pocket, he had a comic-opera in one act.

"That," said daddy Dupin, "is for Leuven. It is a comic-opera, I mean a genuine one, a really *comic* comic-opera, not one of the lugubrious comic-operas of the new school, the comic-operas in which they squall heavy lovers' duets that never come to an end, in which they despair, kill themselves, die with loud shrieks at the descent of the curtain— We must get back to the comic-opera, to light subjects, short romances, simple little songs."

"Oh! simple little songs nowadays—"

"Nowadays! Nowadays! You say that on account of what has lately happened— on account of this war and these defeats of ours. All the more reason for our remaining French. If we find it amusing to become dull, the game will be up, all up with the theatres, all up with everything— Yes, yes, I know, the five milliards, Alsace-Lorraine— Well! we took them, now they are taken from us; we shall take them again— The revolutions, wars, invasions, I have seen— and France is always France— That reminds me— I have made a song about

it— wait a bit— I will read it to you— it is in my pocket-book.”

He had in his pocket-book half a score of leaflets crammed with short verses— he begins to hunt for it.

“No, it's not that one— I have sung you that already, the other day at Meilhac's. *Il ne faut qu'un coup pour tuer un loup*. You remember?”

“Yes, yes, I remember.”

“Ah! here it is— here it is—”

And forcing me to go inside the Variétés lobby he sings me, not without a certain art in delivery, a long patriotic ballad— *La France étant toujours la France, les Français toujours des Français*. Then, his song over, he looks at his watch.

“Five o'clock— Oh! I shall miss Leuven. I told him yesterday I was going to bring him my comic-opera— he is waiting for me at the theatre— Ta, ta! Ta, ta!”

I watched him making off with a jaunty step, along the boulevard, this author whose first piece saw the light on July the 11th, 1808— For I have just found the exact date of daddy Dupin's first venture. The piece was a vaudeville in one act, entitled : *Le Voyage à Chambord ou la veille de la première représentation du Bourgeois gentilhomme*. The least little bit of a piece then bore two titles, and sometimes these titles ran to an extraordinary length. Pieces not only had two titles, they had always two authors at least. And M. Dupin's collaborator in the *Voyage à Chambord* was Desfontaines, the Desfontaines whose signature is attached to a hundred odd pieces along with those of Piis, Radet, and Barre. Desfontaines, who had been a courtly author under Louis XV and Librarian to Monsieur under Louis XVI, was born in 1733. Thus he was seventy-five when he produced the *Voyage à Chambord* at the Variétés. He told his young collaborator how he had been introduced to Crébillon behind the scenes at the Comédie-Française, when the latter, more than eighty years old, brought out his last tragedy— And Crébillon, born in 1674, was twenty-five when Racine, the real, the great Racine, not Louis, died, in 1699, at his little house in the Rue des Marais. Thus there are only two people between Racine and daddy Dupin, only two people between Louise Michel and Madame de Maintenon.

What a heap of anecdotes I have got out of daddy Dupin! At this moment they come back to my mind in shoals. I was seated one evening by his side in the stalls at the Opéra-Comique. They were playing the *Tableau parlant*.

"Ah!" said he, "I once saw a very curious performance of the *Tableau parlant*. The Emperor was present; it was a short time after his return from Russia. By and by Colombine starts her air :

Vous étiez ce que vous n'êtes plus,
Vous n'étiez pas ce que vous êtes,
Et vous aviez pour faire des conquêtes,
Et vous aviez ce que vous n'avez plus.
Ils sont passés ces jours de fêtes!
Ils sont passés, ils ne reviendront plus!

"And Colombine repeated five or six times : *Ils sont passés ces jours de fêtes! Ils sont passés, ils ne reviendront plus*—

"There was a dead silence in the house. No one dared look openly at the Emperor, but everybody took a side glance under the eyelids, at him. He sat motionless, impassive, without stirring, and seemed not to understand. No one dared applaud, and the songstress, upset, seeing the cause of the universal silence, began trembling in every limb and stammered, rather than sang, the last repetition of the air."

Daddy Dupin had not, as far as that goes, retained a very favourable impression of the Emperor. Upon my saying to him one day :

"Why, you must have seen Napoleon closer and more often than we have seen Louis-Philippe."

"Seen Napoleon!— More than a hundred times." "He was handsome, was he not, very handsome?"

"Napoleon, handsome— He was a little, fat, vulgar-looking man."

He often gave me the same answer in the same terms. It was evidently the final impression he had retained of the Emperor. May be, from the top of the Variétés steps, while waiting for the rehearsal of one of his two hundred vaudevilles, Dupin had seen the Emperor pass along the boulevard, during the Hundred Days, when he had grown squat, heavy, and gloomy— This final impression had lasted, entirely effacing all the others. Besides, Napoleon only cared for high art, Talma,

tragedy, and so forth—— He had little taste for vaudevilles and songs. Dupin, on that account, bore him a slight grudge.

After 1830, however, the Emperor became popular once more, and had his praises sung by daddy Dupin. A few years ago, in a second-hand bookstall on the quay, I had come across a topical piece entitled *Napoléon à Berlin ou la redingote grise* (always two titles), represented at the Variétés on the 15th of October, 1830. Authors, Dumersan and Dupin. About four o'clock daddy Dupin turned up at Meilhac's (he put in an appearance there every day).

"I have found a piece of yours," said I to him.

"What piece?"

"*Napoléon à Berlin ou la redingote grise.*"

"*Napoléon à Berlin*—— I never wrote any such piece."

"It is by you all the same."

"No, I tell you——"

"Oh, yes, it is—— and the piece was played at the Variétés in 1830." Then I shew him on the cover his own name following Dumersan's.

"Ah!" said he, "to be sure, to be sure—— Wait a bit—— there is one verse of mine in the thing. It was delivered by Lhérie and was encored every evening—— I remember it."

He set off singing to us, to Figaro's tune from the *Barbier* :

Vive à jamais ce fils de la victoire,
Nous le suivons en chantant à la gloire.
Ah ! le grand homme ! Quel général !
Quel général que l' petit caporal !

He had forgotten the title of the piece, but he remembered the verse that was a *little thing of his own*.

We had carried him off one day to dine at the Pavillon Henry IV, not without some trouble, for it was a trip into the country, and he had at first made a strenuous resistance. At last, however, he comes, and reaching the terrace, stops to have a look at the prospect, and says to us :

"To get here in the old days you had to make your way through a horrid forest—— it was in that direction—— look—— over there"

And he pointed towards the woods, towns, and race-course of Le Vésinet.





I met him one day at the Place Clichy, about four o'clock. The spot is one of the most crowded and animated in Paris.

"It was here," said Dupin, "I shot my first hare."

"Your first hare, here?"

"Yes, I was eighteen; there was good shooting here in the time of the Empire."

And the man who shot his first hare at the Place Clichy, in 1805, was just now singing me a ballad under the porch of the Variétés.

Sunday, the 2nd of July. — They are voting, and voting away. To fill up the representation of Paris we have twenty-two deputies to elect. Going to give up my voting paper in my proper polling district, I have found out what a very curious thing it is to look on at people voting. It is by no means a monotonous sight, far from it. Nothing is less like one elector than another elector. It is an odd series of changing and infinitely varied types. Would you like to join me in taking a peep at this little march past of Paris citizens?—

The serious, solemn, conscientious elector. He fulfils a duty, is dignified and austere. He thoroughly enters into the thing and makes a fine flourish when signing the register. He stalks up to the deal box that is to receive his voting paper like a priest to the tabernacle enshrining the body of his God. He hands his paper to the presiding officer, with a dramatic gesture, and an air of inspiration. It is then that he gets his moment of sovereignty. He enjoys it with a sense of delight. He is conscious of the king in him.

The elector who has a contempt for universal suffrage. They have told him: "You must vote! you must vote! it is your duty." So here he is, but really it was not worth while troubling himself. He, of course, is an intelligent man, but other people!— ah! other people!— Universal suffrage, what nonsense! His voting paper will disappear and be lost among the voting papers of a lot of noodles and ragamuffins. With an air of negligence he makes a fearful little scrawl on the register. He glances sarcastically at the official. Well he knows he is going to be beaten. He is one of the minority. He is proud of it.

The mysterious elector, who doesn't want it known which way he votes. He has done his voting paper up into a little packet or roll. He is restless and suspicious. He keeps an eye on the presiding officer. He watches his voting paper drop into the box, and proceeds to examine the latter. Suppose it should have a false bottom?

The elector who has the courage of his opinions. Whether a reactionary or a democrat, he makes his entry with his nose in the air, his voting paper wide open in his hand, so as to let the name of his candidate be seen. The presiding officer says to him "Fold up your paper." "What for! I make no concealment, I have the courage of my opinions." "It's the law. Fold up your paper——" He submits, folds up his voting paper and out he goes as he came in, casting looks of assurance all round him. He crushes you with his bravery and resolution.

Here comes M. Prudhomme, admirable, eternal, immovable M. Prudhomme. He has brought his wife and his little boy. He wants the youngster to have seen his father vote, and he says to the brat on the way out: "Your father has just dropped his vote in the urn." "But it was a box, papa." "That box was an urn, my child, etc.——"

An old invalid gentleman comes up to vote, leaning on his servant's arm. He votes first——

Then it is the footman's turn. His master watches him and says to himself: "Antoine promised me to vote like me, for the reactionary candidate. Perhaps he is voting for the socialists." And I would lay a wager it is so. The servant seldom votes as his master does. "I have just been to vote, said a valet one day: I've *cancelled* the gov'nor."

Finally, there is the meeting of rich and poor elector. The millionaire alights from his brougham at the door of the polling-station, as the papers are being distributed, and he rubs shoulders with the vagabond. The first takes a blue, the second a red voting paper. Both go in together. The millionaire looks at the ragamuffin's tatters, and says to himself: "To think that that object has a vote, has a vote—just as I have!" Says the ragamuffin to himself: "To-day, I am as good as you are, and soon, thanks to the little deal box inside there, it will be my day every day!"

And the vagabond is right, this day of his, which will be *every day*, has a great likelihood of coming, and of coming regularly by the medium of universal suffrage. Some years ago, in the country, on the polling day for the re-election of the municipal council of our little Commune, I was on my way to fulfil my electoral duties, and in front of me there were meandering, zigzagging, and lurching from side to side of the road, two other electors, my equals and brothers—— They were two notable toppers, cheery fellows, mark you, and good-tempered, but thoroughly drunk. They were going, just like myself, to perform an act of sovereignty.

At the moment I was passing ahead of them, the more unsteady of these two electors said to his comrade :

"Well, and what then! A municipal councillor—— that's no great matter!—— And even if it were a deputy—— Deputies! We are more than deputies, d'ye see, since it's we who elect them, and not they who elect us—— It's only the nation that counts and *we* are the nation!"

"Right you are there," said drunkard number two, "*we* are the nation!"

They entered the voting-room and gave in their papers. They were right, perfectly right. You will allow, won't you, that that every Sunday—the voting is on Sundays—there are a hundred thousand tipsy men scattered among all the public-houses in France. Well, on the polling day, these hundred thousand tipsy men count as a hundred thousand, and MM. Victor Hugo, Thiers, de Mac-Mahon, Meissonier, Pasteur, Berthelot, Émile Augier, Alexandre Dumas, Taine and Renan count as ten. That is what universal suffrage comes to.

Monday, the 3rd of July. — The day before yesterday, Saturday, the Count de Paris, who will perhaps be king of France one of these days, dined at Versailles with the man who is king of France for the moment, Monsieur Thiers. Yes, the man who can do almost anything he likes with us, who can lead us on to the Republic, or take us back to the Monarchy, as he chooses, is this witty and eloquent little scion of the middle-classes, who has just recaptured Paris from the Commune, and restored the unity of the nation.

I have retained a very clear impression of the sitting of the "Corps

Législatif," which was the occasion of M. Thiers' return to the Palais-Bourbon. It was the 6th of November, 1863, the opening day of the session. M. de Morny was President of the Chamber. M. Thiers took up his place on the Left, on the upper benches, below M. Jules Simon, alongside M. Lanjuinais. All eyes were fixed on him, and also on M. Berryer, the other important personage who returned on that day. M. Thiers was exceedingly cheerful, alert and spry. He found himself among a certain number of his old colleagues of the "Constituante" and "Législative"; he was greeted with many a welcome and shake of the hand. I was at that time secretary of the "Corps Législatif." Posted at a little table, beneath the tribune, between my friends Maurel-Duperré and Anatole Claveau, I was writing out the minutes of the Chamber. Sitting on a little stool close by me was the head-usher of the Chamber, his silver chain round his neck and his sword at his side. I was willing enough to have a chat with him. He had seen a good many things and that day he said to me :

"Look at M. Thiers, what an air of contentment there is about him. He is like a fish getting back to the water. I was already one of the ushers of the Chamber when he was elected after 1830, and just now he recognized me. Says he to me : 'Hullo! are *you* still here?' The thing seemed to surprise him. Since he is here, why shouldn't I be?"

M. de Morny, in his opening speech, alluded with much gracefulness and courtesy to the return to political life of certain great parliamentary notabilities, professed himself delighted to meet old colleagues once more, and declared that he had no doubt about the loyalty of their intentions, etc., etc.

Next day, M. de Morny went to the Tuileries to see the Emperor. The latter complimented him on his speech. "Nevertheless," he added, "there was one rather emphatic sentence about M. Thiers' election. You said : '*For my part, I am delighted.*' A little too strong, *delighted*; a little too strong."

M. de Morny answered that this was a matter of colleagues with whom he had formerly been on excellent terms, etc., etc.

"Come, come," rejoined the Emperor, good-humouredly enough, "I

must look after this, I am surrounded by enemies. You are an Orleanist, a decided Orleanist."

M. Thiers and M. de Morny had, in fact, been very intimate before the Coup d'État; but these good relations were brusquely interrupted on the 2nd of December. M. Thiers was one of the first deputies to be arrested by M. de Morny's orders. Thus, since that time, the breach between them had been complete; they cut one another dead, but when M. Thiers was elected a deputy and had to return to the Chamber, now presided over by M. de Morny, a patching up of matters seemed necessary on both sides.

On Friday, 7th of November, 1863, the day after the opening of the session, M. Thiers *chanced* to pay a visit, at half past one, to M. de Morny's picture gallery. Five minutes later, the President of the "Corps Législatif" also *chanced* to pass that way. They met in front of the famous portrait of Rembrandt and shook hands. A brief conversation took place, Rembrandt providing the subject for the talk, and there was an end of the matter.

M. Thiers addressed the Chamber again for the first time on the 12th of November, 1863. He supported, against the election of an official candidate, M. Noubel, the protest of his friend, M. Baze, the fierce questor. The greatest curiosity was aroused, not less great was the disappointment. All that M. Thiers did was to deliver a little business speech, as sober as it was brief. He was not on his legs for more than ten minutes or so. Hardly had he begun before he had come to an end. It looked as though he had wanted to try his voice, and recover the pitch of the House.

But if this first speech was ineffective and made little noise, M. Thiers regained his old position, that day, by a capital epigram. The Emperor was suffering from another fit of the mania for congresses, which all his life tormented him. In the opening speech he had spoken of the necessity for a congress being convened to put an end to the feeling of insecurity in Europe, and as, after the sitting, people were talking over the project in the Conference room :

"I have heard of a consultation of doctors," said M. Thiers, "but of a consultation of patients, never!"

M. Thiers' real return to parliamentary life took place on the 11th of January, 1864, in the debate on the address. I can still see him ascending the tribune, this little chap so often sketched by my friend Cham. From the little body I can hear issuing a tiny voice, a voice both sharp and thin, the hardest and most disagreeable of voices. In the faces of a certain number of deputies who had never heard M. Thiers speak, you could clearly read this thought: "What! is this M. Thiers, only this? Why, M. Rouher will make a mouthful of him." Two or three members of the Right shouted: "Speak up, speak up!" "All right," answered M. Thiers, "you will hear me well enough by and by."

And in point of fact, all of a sudden they did hear him. It took to speaking loud and clear, did this tiny voice. It gained emphasis, body and authority. A wonderful silence came about, a silence the like of which I have never *heard*, for silence can be heard well enough. I will go so far as to say that the value and potency of an orator can be measured by the silence he imposes on an assembly.

The same old usher, of whom I spoke just now, was a great admirer of M. Thiers. The ushers are entrusted with the task of securing the observance of silence. As soon as a murmur arises such as threatens to drown the speaker's voice, the two ushers seated on the Right and Left of the tribune interject: "Silence! Silence!" now and again. Well, one day this old usher, seeing M. Thiers ascend the tribune:

"Ah! it's M. Thiers! There's nothing more for us to do. They never stir when M. Thiers is in the tribune. The very blue bottles daren't fly during M. Thiers' speeches."

He was a wonder that day, was M. Thiers, and thenceforward, up to the fall of the Empire, the tiny voice continued to make itself heard, becoming louder and louder, and more and more eloquent. Labour lost, and words wasted. The Emperor stopped his ears, and rushed into the abyss, despite the sharp lessons of Mexico and Sadowa.

Until the month of May, 1870, M. Thiers showed no sign of weariness or of giving way for a single minute. But he felt himself overcome with discouragement after the Plebiscite. It was at this juncture that I had the honour to assist at a conversation with M. Thiers. I use the expres-

sion *assist* designedly; people usually took but little share in a talk with M. Thiers. The conversation generally became a monologue. No one, for that matter, had any wish to interrupt these monologues; they were delicious. M. Thiers, on the occasion in question, spoke of his lassitude. He felt his efforts useless, powerless, and declared himself deeply disgusted with politics. All of a sudden, a very old memory came back to his mind, and the little story he told us seemed to me so curious that, the same evening, I took an exact note of M. Thiers' words. To-day I have nothing to do but write them down again.

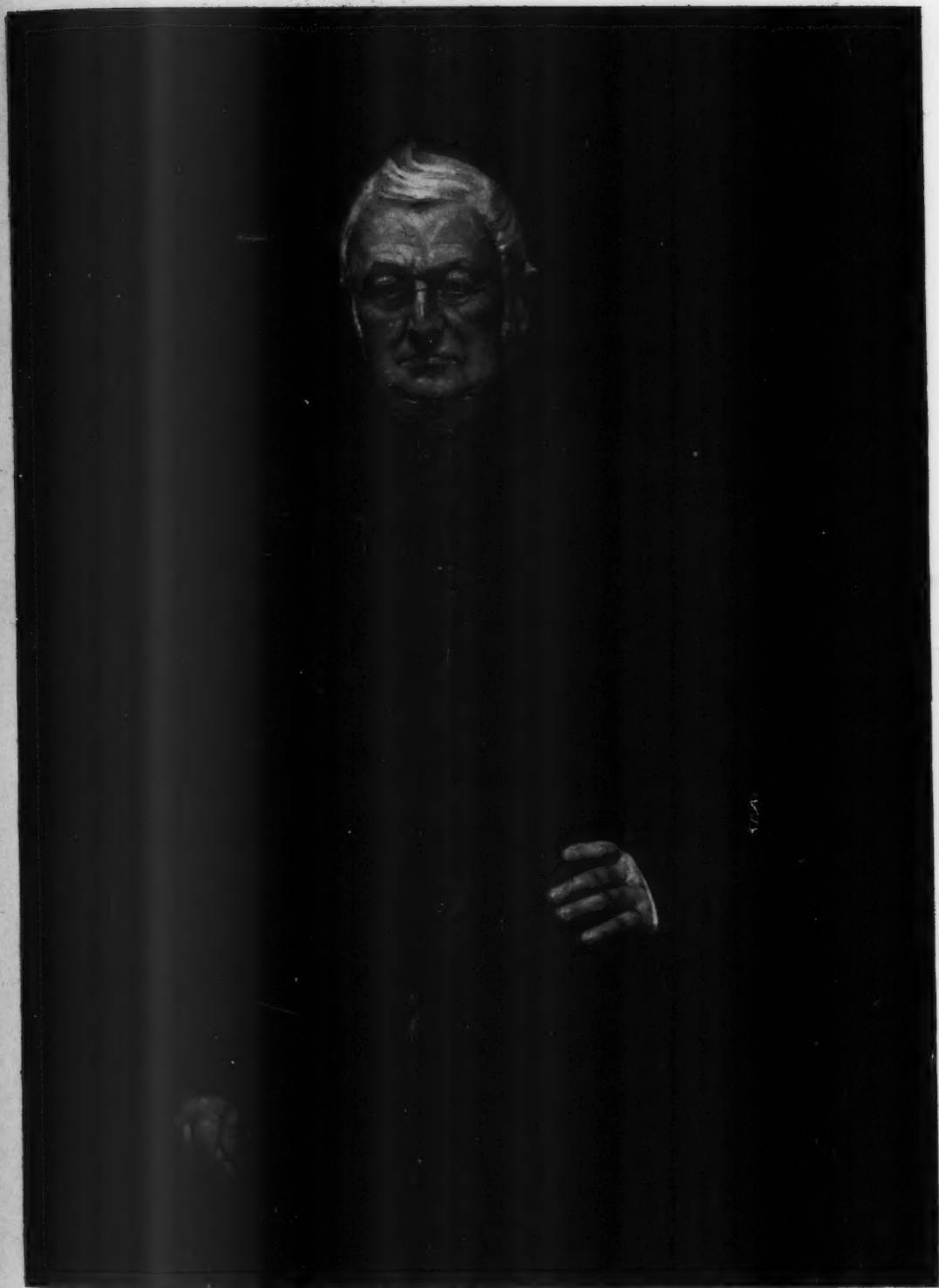
"Ah!" he said to us, "how right he was, M. de X. in 1832. I was in the ministry for the first time. I come to take possession of my post. There I find, among the upper officials, an old head of a division, the M. de X. I speak of, a man of great merit and wit, an old hand at business, an excellent fellow to work with; but his back turned on anything like ambition, lightly despatching his duties, then going to the Opera, reading the free-and-easy romances of the eighteenth century, and running after the girls. That was the great business of his life. He at once had a little frank talk with me, and set himself to give me a lecture. 'I wonder at you,' said he to me, 'for having the courage and the folly to concern yourself with the affairs of your country, and to get enthusiastic about all such nonsense as progress, public welfare, greatness of France, etc., etc. Now, don't go wasting your time, young as you are, with your wit and talent. Occupy yourself with history, literature, the theatre, but not with politics. This country of ours is abominable. There is nothing, nothing, to be done for it. Look at my own case. I was a junior accountant in the Royal Household before 1789. Then comes the Revolution. I let myself slowly be mastered by the ideas and passions of the time. I am one of those who ran on the Varennes road, and who brought Louis XVI back to Paris. Then, in due course, as people were everywhere saying: 'There will be no real Republic until the King's head is cut off,' I said, with everybody else: 'Off with the King's head!' And they cut it off. Yes, I was a witness of those things and I approved them, and then I saw France abandon herself to a soldier of fortune, who led her to the shambles. See what we got, instead of the old House

of France. Be persuaded by me, M. Thiers, and do not go in for politics.'"

M. Thiers took good care not to follow this advice. He was made for politics and made for the tribune. I have often heard him speak; there never was a greater artist in words. He had all the master qualities of the orator, order, clearness, life, movement. Not a trace of false emphasis, or of declamation. Were they speeches of his? Were they conversations? I hardly know, but I am quite sure they were admirable things. What naturalness! What simplicity! What suppleness! What facility? And what effects gained without ever having the air of seeking for an effect! It was the height of simplicity, but at the same time the height of art without the appearance of art, and just because of the non-appearance of art. M. Thiers' talent has, moreover, been marvellously defined by M. Thiers himself in a letter he wrote to Sainte-Beuve.

"There exists between our friends the writers for effect and myself," wrote M. Thiers, "a hopeless misunderstanding. In the arts, I only believe in what is simple, and I hold that every effect sought for is an effect missed. I look at the history of all literatures, and there I see that the seekers for effect have lasted for the life not of a generation, but of a fashion, and assuredly it is not worth while tormenting one's self for such an immortality as that. It is a huge piece of impertinence, to make a pretension of so long occupying other people about one's self, that is to say about one's style. It is only human affairs laid bare in their truth, that is to say in their grandeur, their variety, their inexhaustible fecundity, that have the right to hold the reader's attention, and that do, in fact, hold it. I have lived in assemblies, and I have been struck by one thing : it is that as soon as an orator uttered what people call a *phrase*, the audience smiled with unspeakable disdain and gave up listening. Not to have the simplest form in view is to fail in understanding either beauty or grandeur."

And the great advantage of the simplest form is that when you speak and when you write, you speak and you write for everybody. It has been said : "*There is some one who has more brains than Voltaire, and that is Mr. Everybody.*" Well, it is as well neither to hate nor to despise this Mr. Everybody.





One day, I remember, I received an invitation to a small literary "At home." The invitation ended with this postscript : "*There will be a devouring of the Philistines.*" I stayed at home. Such an orgy had no temptations for me.

You must not merely write for the superfine, the jaded, and the fastidious. You must write for the gentleman who is walking along the pavement opposite, with his nose in his newspaper, and his umbrella under his arm. You must write for that bulky dame, all out of breath, whom I can see from my windows, toiling to reach her seat in the Odéon omnibus. You must boldly write for the smug citizen, even if it be only to try and rid him of his grossness, to deprive him of his smug citizenship, and if I dared, I would say you must write even for the fools.

One evening at the Gymnase, an act was just over. The house was ringing with shouts for Desclée the admirable— she comes forward amid a tempest of applause. The curtain down, people crowd round Desclée, and congratulate her.

"What a success! what a hit!"

"No," she answered.

"How so?"

"Down there, in the front row of the stalls, are two fools who have not budged since the beginning of the evening, and who did not join in the applause just now."

"But if they are fools, what difference does it make to you?"

"Ah! but you have to impress the fools— What would become of us otherwise? There's such a lot of them."

And Desclée came off the stage after the following act in delight, clapping her hands, and crying :

"My two fools have laughed, my two fools have applauded."

The odd thing is that this epigram of Mademoiselle Desclée's had been made to me some years before, by whom? By M. Thiers. One day—or rather one night—it was two or three o'clock in the morning—M. Thiers, seated between two lamps at the big green table of the Conference Room at the "Corps Législatif," was correcting the proofs of an admirable speech he had delivered in the course of the day on the Mexican

question. He was a great reviser of proofs, was M. Thiers, he revised too much, he had the very vexatious habit of re-writing his speeches and of substituting grandiose and lengthy sentences for the little rough and incorrect phrases that had been caught on the wing, all hot and palpitating by the short-hand writers. *That is not French*, said M. Thiers—Agreed; but it was alive— And after M. Thiers had revised and touched up his proofs, it was much less alive and it was not always *better French*.

That night, I came up to M. Thiers in a respectful way. We were mightily afraid of him— He was extremely touchy and would have his back up at the slightest remark. I ventured to bring to his notice that, in revising his proofs, he had written two sentences one after another, which said exactly the same thing in nearly identical terms.

"I am quite aware of it," answered M. Thiers, in his little sharp voice, "I am quite aware of it, and it's done on purpose. You are to understand, on purpose— The first time it's for intelligent people, for those who seize a thing at once— But one must speak for everybody, make one's self understood by everybody— So the second time it's for the fools, for the majority outside the Chamber."

And as I was walking away, crestfallen after my snub, I heard M. Thiers mumbling between his teeth :

"And inside, too."

Friday, the 7th of July. — I have come across three volumes of Roederer which must be extremely rare, for only fifty copies of each were struck off. These three volumes are a collection of articles published by Roederer in the *Journal de Paris*. The majority of these articles are marvels of wit and sense, but the pearl of the collection is a little dissertation of a hundred and fifty lines, entitled "Of fools in Republics," and published in the year IV.

Roederer begins by defining the fool :

"It is," says he "an animal with pretensions. I know not who it was who said of a fool : 'He has not enough wit to be only an animal, that is to say not to add a touch of the ridiculous to misfortune.' Much

has been said about the danger of the corruption of morals in a Republic, but nothing as yet about the danger of foolery."

It was the time of the Republic, and Roederer was a Republican. He became an Imperialist under the Empire, and a Monarchist under the Monarchy, imitating in that nine tenths of Frenchmen, who have been, are, and always will be, partisans of the existing government. France is, before everything, a conservative country, and I have never been able to understand the accusation incessantly thrown in our face that we are an ungovernable people. Nothing is more unjust. History is at hand to show clearly that, for a century past, our governments have never been overturned but by themselves.

Roederer, then, Republican for the time being, explains how Republics have no need for anxiety about insignificant fools of the Royalist sort. They are not very dangerous. "*Their destiny*," says he, "*is to pass on in due time, from the function of young fools to the dignity of old fools.*" But the Republican fool, there is the real danger.

"*If haply he gets hold of some post, woe to the country! The fool who finds himself one of the ruling classes fancies he detects in himself an increase of merit, and nothing is more dangerous than a fool in authority. You may have a harmless animal, never a harmless fool.*"

To these perfectly just remarks of Roederer's, I will add that fools have a place marked out for them in a Monarchy; they have not under a Republic, and the more's the pity. Kings have chamberlains, equerries, masters of the royal hounds, palace prefects, posts which only require a dignified deportment, posts ready made for the satisfaction of monarchical fools. In these they can show themselves off without danger to the State, but the Republic having neither chamberlains nor equerries, is obliged to give its fools substantial, effective, serious places. And that is why fools are perhaps more dangerous under the Republic than under the Monarchy.

Thursday, the 13th of July. — Yesterday evening was the re-opening of the Opera; they played *Masaniello* — a full house, but anything but a brilliant; one woman in a low dress, one only! In a box on the first

tier, facing the stage, were the members of the Chinese Embassy, the Embassy that, landing in France in September 1870, spent ten months in running after the French Government from Paris to Tours, from Tours to Bordeaux, and from Bordeaux to Versailles. They have finished at length by finding in M. Thiers a head of the State in a position to give them audience.

On the stage, no more ushers with silver chains, no more big lackeys in their laced Imperial liveries, and that to the deep despair of pretty Mademoiselle X.'s mother; she pervades the place lamenting and repeating :

"An opera without a sovereign, without a court! The thing is impossible—there will never be any opera again!"

If the ballet girls' mothers were put to the vote as to the question of the form of government, I am pretty sure they would unanimously pronounce in favour of the Monarchy.

This mother of pretty Mademoiselle X.'s has moreover always had an extreme weakness for sovereigns.

One of my friends, five or six years ago, had the honour to be on particularly good terms both with mother and daughter. He arrives one day, about four o'clock, rings the bell—The mother herself comes to the door. They were unpretentious people—and, seeing my friend : "Oh! my dear sir!" she cried, "we can't see you to-day—if you only knew—if you only knew—"

And in the exuberance of her delight, scarlet with happiness and pride, she added :

"We have got hold of a king! We have got hold of a king!" And thereupon she shut the door in my friend's face. The king in question, a short time afterwards, was driven out of his dominion by a Revolution, it was a revenge for my friend.

Between the third and fourth acts of *Masaniello*, the orchestra played a selection from *Manon Lescaut*. The curtain was raised; all the artists of the Opera, grouped round Auber's bust, sang the prayer from *Masaniello*, then they laid palms and wreaths at the foot of the bust.

Dear, kind Auber, I had a talk with him behind the scenes at one of the last performances given at the Opera, under the Empire. They played

Masaniello on that evening, too, but *Masaniello* accompanied by the first performance of the *Marseillaise*, sung by Madame Marie Sass with the greatest brilliancy and effect. There was a great outburst of enthusiasm in the house, and certain spectators that evening offered mighty curious subjects for contemplation and study.

At the side of the stage, in M. Perrin's little box, was M. Maurice Richard, Minister of Fine Arts; he was radiant with triumph. It was he who had suggested to the Opera management to have the *Marseillaise* sung, the *Marseillaise* which after having been considered a seditious song for eighteen years was that evening again becoming the song of the nation.

"The *Marseillaise* is no longer for rioters," said M. Maurice Richard to himself, "it is for us, for our government, and it is about to lead us to victory, depend on it."

In a "baignoire" on the ground-tier was M. de Persigny. He was attentively watching the house. In the midst of his occasionally chimerical ideas, he had plenty of wit and even of common sense, had M. de Persigny, and he was familiar with the history of the last forty years. And this, I daresay, was what ran in M. de Persigny's head, while many of the spectators were joining in the chorus of the *Marseillaise*. "Oh, yes, a great hit, lots of emotion and enthusiasm—too much enthusiasm, may be! Very patriotic this tune, if you like, but not very dynastic!"

In the little screened-off box at the side of the stage was M. de Laferrière, Court Chamberlain, who was thinking: "I ought to have brought the Emperor: they would shout *Vive l'Empereur!* instead of *Vive la France!*"

By the side of M. de Laferrière, was our Foreign Minister, the Duke de Gramont. A very fine gentleman, it appears, but one who has made the mistake of getting the notion into his head that he is a genius. That was no part of his destiny; he wanted to be the French Bismarck, and we know what came of that.

The Duke de Gramont is one of those men who are always saying to themselves, from morning to night: "Let us be M. de Talleyrand." To one of my friends, received by him at a formal leave-taking in 1870, he delivered this extraordinary sentence: "A diplomatist should always listen in silence and, when his interlocutor has done speaking, should

reply : 'I was aware of it.' " My friend, thinking he had not heard quite correctly, got him to repeat the sentence.

The Duke de Gramont is good-looking, a little too good-looking, stiff, cold and dignified. While Madame Sass was singing the *Marseillaise*, he was evidently forcing himself to be more impenetrable and impassible than ever. He reflected : "They must not be able to read anything in my countenance."—And nothing could be read in it, absolutely nothing.

M. Émile de Girardin, on the other hand, displayed tremendous excitement ; he was shouting, gesticulating, and joining in the chorus of the *Marseillaise*. It was he who was the first to cry out : "Stand up, everybody!" And everybody stood up. The movement was very simple and very fine. M. de Girardin had discovered a cadet of Saint-Cyr among the audience, hunted him out, and posted him in the very front of his box.

Alongside the Emperor's box, in that set apart for the suite, was the very young as well as lovely and charming Duchess de Mouchy, pale, touched, grave and surprised— It is quite likely she had never heard the *Marseillaise*. Another Duchess de Mouchy who, dying by her husband's side, was a miracle of courage, must have heard it in 1794, on the day of her execution on the Place de la Révolution.

But on the stage itself, the scene was absolutely extraordinary. All the humble population of the wings was beside itself with emotion and delight : machinists in their working aprons, chorus-singers dressed as Neapolitan fishermen, ballet-girls clothed in silk and satin, firemen in uniform. The whole lot were singing, applauding, shouting and shedding tears. It was necessary, after the fall of the curtain, to rescue Madame Sass from the hands of a hundred persons who, in their anxiety to embrace her, were crushing and stifling her. She emerged white as a sheet, half-dead.

During this episode on the stage we were gathered in a little group round M. Auber, and all of a sudden he said to us : "Ah! What a number of times I have heard the *Marseillaise*, since 1792!"

"Since 1792!"

There was a general protest.

"Yes," repeated M. Auber, "since 1792—and I have still earlier recollections. I perfectly remember having seen, in 1789, the French guards firing on the 'Royal-Allemand' regiment. I was seven years old—I can still see quite distinctly the Prince de Lambesc on horseback, at the head of the 'Royal-Allemand.' I was at a window on the Boulevard, about where the Café de Tortoni now stands. During the Terror, my father took himself off in hiding at Creil; then came the Directory. Ah! what fun there was under the Directory! The *Marseillaise*! What a crowd of memories, Gossec had composed an arrangement of the *Marseillaise*. At the last verse, *Amour sacré de la Patrie*—all the performers on the stage went down on their knees—then, before the shout, *Aux armes*, there was a momentary silence while the kettle-drum beat the signal to charge, and the big drum imitated cannon in the wings. Suddenly a very lovely woman advanced, waving a tricolour flag—it was Liberty! And every one rose, shouting in unison: *Aux armes, citoyens*! It was very fine, very fine. One day, on the occasion of some victory or other, they had the *Marseillaise* sung in the Tuileries gardens, in the open air. At the water's edge, they had posted a hundred drums and four pieces of cannon; of this the public knew nothing. At the last verse arose a formidable rolling of drums and real reports of cannon: there was a universal panic; people made off on all sides; they fancied there was a revolution in Paris."

Thus spoke M. Auber, and we were all silent, moved at hearing this young man, as it were, telling us what he had seen and heard about eighty years ago.

The duet in the second act of *Masaniello*, enthusiastically encored, had set the audience on fire.

One of us said to M. Auber:

"Your duet has told wonderfully to-night!"

"Yes," he answered, "but a thumping victory on the Rhine would be worth more than all these shouts and transports in the Opera House. Then, you see, I don't care for the duet in *Masaniello* to be so telling, and I don't care either to hear the *Marseillaise* sung at the Opera. I am of the opinion of Rouget de l'Isle. One evening, in 1815, he enters a

friend's room, quite upset and frightened. He drops into a chair : 'Ah! things are going badly, indeed,' says he.

" 'Why so?'

" 'I have just heard them singing the *Marseillaise!*' I have already seen one invasion, I dread seeing another. I am used to revolutions. What is one more or less when one has seen so many! But an invasion, the foreigner in France, in Paris—— I remember 1814 and 1815; are we quite ready for this war?'

This was M. Auber's last word. What wit he had, and above all, how well he knew how to impart value, relief, and effect to apparently the most insignificant phrase! What grace, delicacy, and discretion in that mind of his! What a delightful smile was wont to light up that kind face of his, that kept the charm of youth until the end!



One night, we were leaving the Théâtre-Français together. They had been playing a comedy in several acts and in verse, which had met with an undoubted success of boredom. There are successes of boredom, successes, too, by no means unproductive of honour for the author. Sainte-Beuve, one

day, made the admirable epigram : "Boredom has a prestige of its own."

"Were you much amused?" asked M. Auber.

"Not too much so, were you?"

"Oh, I have not spent such a very disagreeable evening."

"Still, when I looked at you once or twice, I fancied——"

"I was asleep, eh? I was asleep—— and that's how I was lucky enough to hear only half the piece; the first hemistich of each verse bored me so that I dozed and didn't hear a single second one."

Another evening, at the Opera, in the Green Room, they were talking of women and love.

"As for myself," said a young painter, famous for his cool assurance,

"I know no woman out of my reach, I—don't—know—a—single—one."

And he doled out each word with the utmost emphasis.

"Really," asked M. Auber, "you don't know one?"

"Look here," the young painter went on, "a week ago, I caught sight of a delicious, absolutely delicious woman in a box at the Variétés—and a woman of a good set, of the best set. I had never spoken a word to her. I pass a whole evening in staring at her in a certain way—Oh! in a certain way, of course, there's the secret. The next day, I find means to get introduced, and the day before yesterday, not later than the day before yesterday, she came up my staircase, veiled, and trembling with emotion."

"Was it really the same woman?" quietly, very quietly, asked M. Auber.

And how charming he was when he described his quarrels with his old housekeeper! She was nearly eighty, and grumbled at being obliged to work at her age.

"Eighty," said M. Auber to her one day, "eighty, what's that to make a fuss about! Why, I am over eighty and still, you see, I work."

"Ah, sir" she answered, "but what a difference! *You* work sitting down!"

Auber read little, I even suspect he did not read at all. One of his friends calls on him one morning, and finds him at work.

"I have got to business," said Auber to him, "I am writing the first act of my new comic opera."

"Whose is the libretto?"

"Scribe's."

"What is the title? The subject?"

"*Manon Lescaut*."

"*Manon Lescaut*! Ah! What an incomparable masterpiece!"

"You are speaking of the novel?"

"Yes."

"Egad, I've not read it."

"You are writing an opera about *Manon Lescaut*, and you have not read the book!"

"No, by Jove—— I've not—— I looked for it in my library—— I have very few books—— I don't possess a *Manon Lescaut*."

"Then ask Scribe for it."

"Scribe! I am by no means sure he has read it. I dare say he just skimmed through it to get a general idea of the story. Scribe never wastes his time."

Auber was a passionate admirer of Mozart. They were talking one day in his presence of the old masters; Beethoven's name was mentioned.

"Oh!" said Auber, "he is the greatest of them all."

"And Mozart?"

"Mozart," replied Auber, "Mozart, stands alone."

Auber was always ready to talk about the past. "Ah, the Directory," he would often say, "the festivities under the Directory—— People were emerging from the nightmare of the Terror. There was a sort of mania for pleasure and gaiety. I would willingly put up with a second Terror could I be eighteen years old once more under a second Directory—— But there's the rub, may be I shall see the Terror again—— I shall never more see my lusty eighteen!"

And he did see once more something very like the Terror; but he was eighty-nine years old, and he was at the close of a long life, full of success and glory.

It was in this way that I heard of Auber's death. I was in London on the 12th of May, sitting in the garden at the International Exhibition. The Band of the Belgian Guides was playing the overture to *Fra Diavolo*; I open the *Standard* and there I find this telegram:

"The *Vengeur* announces the fall of the Vendôme column for to-morrow. The death of Auber is hourly expected."

The Belgian Guides went on with the overture to *Fra Diavolo*. Poor Auber! He had borne up bravely under the hardships of the first siege; so long as he had had *his* Bois de Boulogne, he had gone, every day, to take his walk round the lake. But the Bois had become a park for cattle, and Auber had found himself pulled up short at the entrance gate. Then they had constructed the redoubt by the Arc de Triomphe. Auber's little brougham no longer got beyond the Champs-Élysées; finally the Com-

mune having erected barricades at the Place Vendôme and at the Place de la Concorde, Auber's carriage had to pull up at the Madeleine. Everybody left; Auber stayed behind. How often had we heard him say: "What! you are able to leave Paris, to live and breathe outside Paris? I could never do it myself."

And, as the event proved, he could not. He finally shut himself up, not caring to see Paris in its actual state. And he died, but he died in Paris.

Saturday, the 15th of July. — Auber's funeral, at the church of La Trinité. Of all the churches in Paris this is surely the one most like a theatre. A tremendous crush, plenty of women, very pretty women, too; the whole ballet staff of the Opera; all the pupils of the Conservatoire. The orchestra and chorus were unrivalled. From the galleries of the church you could hear this marvellous concert, without seeing anything of the ceremony, altar, priests, or pall-bearers. You had to make a little effort from time to time to remember you were in church and not in a theatre.

As I made my way out with the crowd, I found myself behind one of the church officials; he was talking to an old lady and saying to her:

"We are overburdened! Everything has begun again at once: marriages, baptisms, funerals— The thing is natural enough— no one thought of marrying during the War and the Commune. As for dying, egad! there was no escaping that any more than at other times; but no decent person was willing to be buried under the Commune— They simply had themselves laid in the crypt— The man they are carrying away we have had here for the past two months, and we have still a lot of arrears to make up."

Thursday, the 27th of July. — The following is an ending-up of a letter dated from Naples:

"I do not approve of your return to Paris. You will find it saddening there. The troubles of France afflict me; she is too old to withstand

such a shock; she will lose her gaiety for ever and my return to Paris will become an impossibility, for Paris will no longer exist."

The author of this letter—the Abbé Galiani—dates it : 27th of July, 1771.

A hundred years, to the day, have elapsed. How many shocks during these hundred years has France withstood! And there is still a Paris.

Monday, the 31st of July. — Here I am in London since the morning.



On reaching Folkestone, I changed a hundred-franc-note for English money. I was left with about two hundred francs of French money, and not to get confused, I put the English coins in my left waistcoat-pocket, and the French coins in the right.

In the evening, on coming back to my hotel, I empty my two pockets of my two handfuls of money. I make two little heaps of them on the mantelpiece, then I begin to look at these two little heaps with some attention, and I find they afford me a very interesting and very instructive sight.

First I arrange all my English coins heads up, and in order of date, 1837, 1841, 1843, 1851, 1857, 1863, 1868, 1870, and on all these coins I see the same superscription : *Victoria dei gratia*, framing the same girlish profile—Victoria—Victoria—Victoria—Everywhere and always Victoria—

With the same chronological classification of my little heap of French money I see defile before my eyes :

Bonaparte, First Consul; Napoleon, Emperor; Louis XVIII, King of France; Charles X, King of France; Louis-Philippe I, King of the French; a very lovely, too lovely person, representing our Second Republic; Napoleon III, Emperor, without a laurel wreath; Napoleon III, Emperor with a laurel wreath.

Our Third Republic has not yet had the time to issue any coinage.



And never have I better understood why we have just lost Alsace and Lorraine.

Tuesday, the 1st of August. — I have been in London already half a score of times, and a pleasure of which I never get tired is to make for the most densely populated parts of this huge town, and alone, on foot, to start off at hap-hazard through the labyrinth of these thousands of streets. In five minutes' time I am lost, altogether lost, and I go straight ahead until I am quite tired out, incessantly interested and amused by the spectacle of this human ant-hill.

At nine o'clock this morning I set out, and here I find in Earl Street, a little alley that takes me to a tiny court-yard, black, cold, damp, and surrounded by old buildings. It is the court-yard of the *Times* Office. For greenery a couple of trees, all told, and such trees! And such greenery! These poor trees are imprisoned behind a little railing in the darkest corner of the yard. Hence they greedily seek the light and warmth of the sun. They bend away from the wall as though by a violent effort, throw themselves forward, and would fall, were they not kept up by the railing on which they lean all worn out and languishing. One of these trees has given forth a shoot, which is treated with due respect; a prop holds it up. The *Times* evidently takes some care of its park.

On the corner of the left-hand house, this inscription : *Printing House Square*; on the right, hand building, *The Mail, The Times, Advertisement Office*. Opposite, in the middle of the principal building, a little porch on which is inscribed in gilt letters : *The Times*. Seven windows on this front; you can see the printers working at case. A policeman is walking up and down on the pavement. There are only two people in the court-yard, he and I.

It is from this little yard that English opinion, and to some extent, too, the world's opinion issues. In this century there is no weightier or more solid power than *The Times*. The Court of the Tuileries has known a good many masters during the past hundred years, Napoleon the First rode his horse into the courts of Potsdam and the Kremlin. The little court of the *Times* has never known but one master, the editor of the *Times*, an anonymous, mysterious, and formidable power.

Wednesday, the 2nd of August. — Another walk at hap-hazard in the streets of London. Covent Garden Market to begin with— What heaps of radishes! What lots of salad! On huge waggons drawn by big horses, veritable mountains of green and red are seen advancing— And this cart in Brydges Street, opposite Drury Lane! Never could I have believed so small a donkey could have drawn so many bundles of celery. There is a hill to get up; the brave little donkey drags against his collar, a twelve-year old youngster whacks the donkey, calls him all

sorts of names, pushes the wheel, and, from time to time, puts out his hand to steady the unstable equilibrium of the pyramid of celery. This youngster is clothed in a most extraordinary fashion. A pair of old yellow and green carpet-slippers, black trousers, so shining with grease that one might fancy them varnished, flowered "piqué" waistcoat, a man's coat with a low collar and the tails all in rags and tatters trailing on the pavement, a pink woollen scarf, and a cap like a French national guard's.

At a corner of Regent Street another little ragamuffin stops me as I go by to offer me matches.

"Matches! Matches! Vesuvians! Vesuvians!"

By his pronunciation of these two words I recognize a compatriot.

"Why, you are French?"

"Yes, sir."

"And why are you in London?"

"On account of the Commune, Monsieur, driving Papa away from Paris."

I cross Saint James's Park. I enter by one of the smaller doors into the cloisters of Westminster, and thence I pass into the church. It is ten o'clock. Service is commencing. In the choir five or six priests and two little bands of choir boys. The notes of the organ swell out. The children begin to chant psalms; the two little choirs answer each other in turn, it is a sort of intoning with marked rhythm and cadence; a strange and charming effect.

A new statue in Westminster, Lord Palmerston's. It is on the left of Pitt and opposite Canning. I pass out of the church, cross a street, a court-yard—and here I am in Westminster Hall. I go into the Court of Exchequer—Ah! what pretty organ-pipe wigs these English judges and barristers have! How trim and dandified they are, and of what a delicious grey! How wise of the English to make their barristers sport Brid'oison's head-gear! Revolutionists, demagogues, or socialists are quite out of the question under a wig like that!

The Crystal Palace is just the same mountain of glass and iron as ever—The same admirable gardens. The same old Sydenham tower with its four hundred steps—One single novelty at the Crystal Palace,

a little Franco-German glass case containing souvenirs and relics of the war. Bombs, bits of burst shells, balls, bullets picked up at Paris, Metz, Strasbourg, Orléans, etc., etc. In all, a hundred and eighty objects carefully classified, ticketed, and catalogued.

A half-burnt Bible, found in the farm of Andegloust (Commune of Chevilly) set on fire by the Prussians on the 3rd of December, 1870. Three or four soldiers' handbooks belonging to men of the 6th (French) Lancers. A small red pennon with this inscription : *This pennon comes from Wært and belonged to the Turcos*. Then zouave gaiters, broken rifle-stocks, eagles from Prussian and French helmets thrown together with philosophic indifference, two pieces of chocolate turned quite white, two lumps of sugar quite black, tri-colour cockades, letters soiled, turned yellow, torn, riddled by bullets, mitrailleuse cartridges, gloves, epaulets, an old tin spoon, Paris newspapers on thin paper, dispatched by balloon, a razor, a Geneva flag with the red cross, a needle-gun, placed alongside a chassepot, a cross of the Legion of Honour by the side of a German order, rosettes, spurs, half a cuirass, a Uhlan lance, a pointed helmet, an old pair of red trousers in rags, covered all over with white, dry, and hard mud.

Three pretty English girls inspect the lot, chatting and joking together with light bursts of laughter. The sight of the red trousers increases their gaiety, and I feel the tears come into my eyes.

Monday, the 7th of August. — At nine o'clock, yesterday evening, as I was entering the Opera-House, an old gentleman was having a lively altercation with the female clerk at the box-office.

"What, not one seat?" said the old gentleman.

"Not one," replied the clerk.

"Not a corner? or a flap seat?"

"Not one corner! Not one!"

"You have nothing left, absolutely nothing?"

"We have the Emperor's box. Will you take the Emperor's box?"

"Can I have a seat, a single seat in the box?"

"Split up the Emperor's box!" cried the clerk in a genuine rage—

"No, sir, no, we do not split up the Emperor's box."

This notion of splitting up the Emperor's box seemed altogether too much for the worthy woman, who shut down her office window in the face of the old gentleman, repeating : "Split up the Emperor's box, indeed!"

According to all appearances, however, that is what they will have to come to. This unlucky box is a sort of awe-inspiring object. No one dares show himself in it. Last week a play-goer turns up, a big banker, and a thorough gentleman to boot, and offers to take the box by the year. A price is agreed on, but next day, if you please, our big banker has thought better of it. He seeks out the manager of the Opera and says to him :

"Look here, yesterday evening at the club, they began *chaffing* me awfully when they knew I was going to rent the Emperor's box. Let me off my bargain, do."

The manager of the Opera, in the nicest way, tore up the agreement, and that is why this terrible box is still waiting for a tenant. How bored the poor Emperor used to get in that box, to be sure. At long intervals he let himself be dragged to the Opera. They used to say to him : "It is your theatre, a sovereign should show himself at the Opera; it is a part of the Imperial function, Sire." The Emperor would give in, and on his arrival, when hardly seated, used to fall into a sort of torpor, a kind of dozing insensibility. The Empress, from time to time, would give him a little tap on the arm with her fan, and say a few words—— Then he would look round him, give the Empress a vague smile, and resume his interrupted reverie.

Wednesday, the 7th of August. — This morning I found the old bird-charmer of the Tuileries Gardens back at his post. All the sparrows were flying, hopping and twittering about him. I used to be a great admirer of this bird-charmer's. Often and often I had come to a stand before him, feeling myself overcome by respectful admiration. What talent! What patience! Thus to come to make the personal acquaintance of every sparrow in the Tuileries. He was a magician, a sorcerer.

And one fine day, if you please, I must needs yield to the curiosity of attempting to penetrate the secrets of this mysterious art. I get up

at six o'clock in the morning. I set out. I buy a penn'orth of bread. I reach the Tuileries. The garden was deserted— Just what I wanted. No one would be a witness of the disastrous check I was inevitably courting.

With my collar turned up I slipped between the flower-beds like a thief— alone— I am alone— I make ready three or four little balls of bread-crumbs. I throw them timidly on the ground, and at the same moment, chirrup— chirrup— chirrup, on all sides— it is an avalanche, a water-spout. One, two, three, five, ten, twenty, fifty, a hundred sparrows dash themselves against me. I have them between my legs, I have them on my shoulders, I have them on my hat. I have them in my pockets. I was a bird-charmer. There is no more trick in it than that— Take my advice and try it! It is charming!

I was soon popular with these sparrows. A few of them, perhaps, who at first distrusted me, stared at me, then looked at one another, and seemed to be saying: "Who is that fellow there, do you know him?" "No, do you?" "No more do I." "He has never been here before." "He is a new comer."

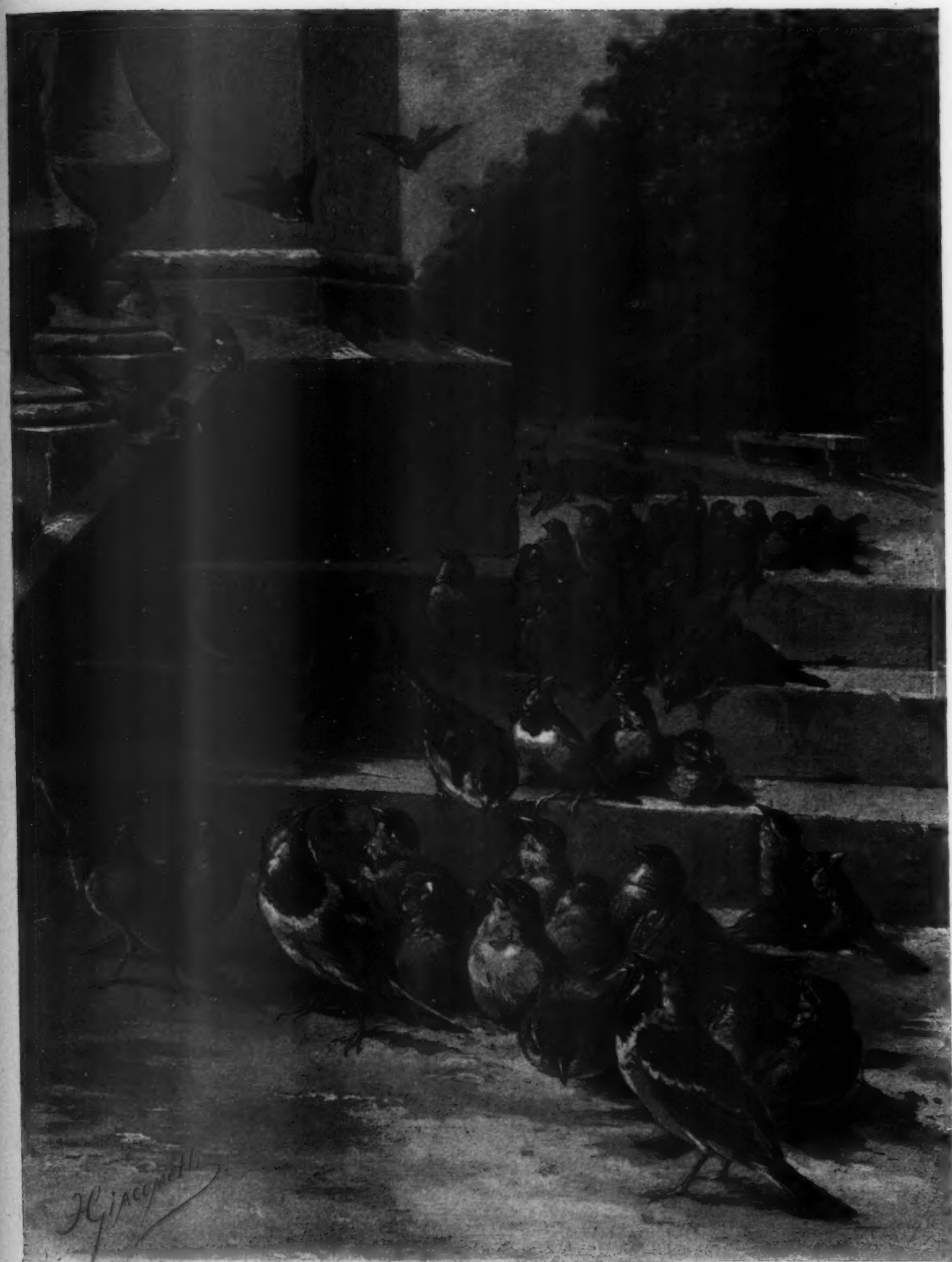
But they were not long in gaining confidence, and began in five minutes' time, twittering, foraging and pecking with the most incredible familiarity.

All this world in miniature, moreover is delicious to look at. A whole article might be written under the heading of "*A Study of Cock-sparrows.*"

There is the saucy sparrow, the impudent sparrow, the presumptuous sparrow, the blustering sparrow, the noisy sparrow, the modest sparrow, etc., etc.

Here you have the "greedy" sparrow, who darts at an enormous lump of bread, swallows it, at a gulp, is stifled, strangled, and retires into a corner, dazed and panting, shaking his head in a despairing way in the effort to get down the lump which is sticking in his throat.

Your "dainty" sparrow— He carries off his lump and discusses it by little mouthfuls at a time, slowly and tranquilly in the shade, far from the noise and the crowd.





Your "humble" sparrow—— He retreats before certain lumps—You can read on his countenance—— "Ah, no! that lump is too big for the likes o' me——" and he abandons it to a less retiring comrade.

Your sparrow "of distinction"—— He has evidently been brought up to a hen-sparrow of irreproachable manners. He never helps himself first—— he waits—— he always seems to be saying to his comrades: "Gentlemen, I will take nothing just now—— After you, should anything be left." And when the hustling begins round him, when he finds himself in the midst of the violent squabbling, of all these ambitions and all these appetites let loose, when he sees his fellows wrangling and worrying, the poor little chap is the picture of grief. "Ah! Good heavens!" he says to himself, "naughty sparrows! What brutality! What rude behaviour! What an idea will he get of our race, that kind gentleman who is throwing us these nice lumps of bread-crumbs!"

Your "pugnacious" sparrow—— He comes and goes, runs, bustles about, gesticulates, giving blows here and blows there, snatching one lump from a comrade's beak and, without even giving himself time to swallow it, letting it go, dropping it on the ground, to go and snatch another lump out of some other beak. His chief concern is not to eat, but to keep others from eating. This is your sparrow in the manger.

Your "philosophic" sparrow—— He doesn't put himself out, he doesn't cast himself into the thick of the throng. He waits until chance brings a lump in his way. There is a touch of fatalism about his philosophy, as well as certain contempt for his comrades' agitation. He tells himself that all the bits of bread-crumbs in the world are things to be despised and are not worth the trouble that most sparrows give themselves to get them. To live on a little, and to live aloof, such is his rule of conduct. 'Tis a sage.

Your "aristocratic" sparrow—— He has a little pinched up, scented, stiffly-starched air. He is hungry. This shower of bread crumbs tempts him. He would much like to have his share of the feast, but for that he must needs expose himself to the contact of this horrid crowd—— He risks it, however, spots a bread-crumbs, makes for it—— but gets a peck from one of his comrades. He retreats forthwith—— shocked and incensed, with a

little stiff, pretentious strut. "See what it is," he reflects, "to compromise one's self with the rabble."

Your "rascally" sparrow—— This one doesn't join in the general fight; he holds aloof like the philosopher, but with different views. He looks—— waits—— and as soon as he sees one of his comrades rising from the ground with a big morsel, he darts up, seizes the big morsel in the air, and flies off with it. He has all the profit of the battle, without any of the risks.

In short, this little world of cock-sparrows is a faithful image of society with all its ridiculous features, all its acts of cowardice, all its passions, all its kinds of greed, an image all the more faithful from the consideration that has occurred to me that it was, on the whole, the "rascally" sparrow who was uppermost.

LUDOVIC HALÉVY.





SISTER EUPHRASIA

When I was at F. in the Vosges, last year, I went for a drive one bright June morning. As the horses slowly traversed a path cut through the middle of a dense wood, my dog Frollo suddenly stopped at the side of a ditch about fifty yards ahead of me, and sat down in the attitude of a meditative poodle. I got out of the carriage to see what he was looking at, and I saw, on the other side of the ditch, a little boy dressed in rags, standing by a bundle of dead branches, and looking so frightened that he was quite ready to cry. You know that when the long hair of the front part of his body has been combed out, Frollo with his muscular hind quarters well shaved, his strong, nervous legs and his silky tufted mane, looks just like a little black lion, and my poodle unfortunately could not say to the child :

"Don't be afraid, little silly; I may look like a lion, but I am as gentle as a lamb!" Frollo can speak, of course, but I am the only one who can understand his language, and as I saw that he was vexed to feel himself misunderstood, I took it upon myself to make the necessary

explanations. I jumped over the ditch, and taking hold of the child's hand led him gently to the side of the road and made him caress the great moustached head which had at first frightened him so much.

Frollo responded to his courtesy as a well behaved dog should do; that is to say he raised himself somewhat on his hind paws, and with a rapid movement of his tongue licked the face of his new friend as if it had been a plate redolent of savoury food. Then, by a few playful gambols, he testified to the fact that he had quite forgiven the child's initial mistake as to his real character.

It was then that I first noticed that the boy had lost one eye, and his other eye seemed in a very bad state. The eyelids were swollen, inflamed, and discharging humour; a net-work of injected veins surrounded the pupil, and on the cornea I could distinguish what looked like a spot of milky white, which was doubtless an incipient ulcer.

"Can you see well, little one?" I asked him.

"Hardly at all," he replied.

"How did you find your way into the wood then?"

"With mother."

"Where is she?"

"Down there!"

"Take me to her."

He picked up his bundle of brushwood with awkward gestures, which already resembled those of a blind person, and we began to walk in the direction to which he had pointed. On the way I learnt that he was not yet eleven years old, that his name was Jean-Baptiste Catabel, and that he lived with his mother, being out in the woods all day, when she gathered—according to the time of year—mulberries or mushrooms, and collected firewood. At night they slept sometimes in one place, sometimes in another, in stables or barns, wherever people would give them a little straw to lie upon.

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We soon came in sight of a woman sitting at the foot of a tree, who got up as we approached. She was tall and bony, with a face

disfigured by privation, but which though burnt by the sun, roughened by the wind, and wrinkled by the cold, still retained some traces of a wild beauty. Her brown eyes were too close to each other, and their restless, piercing glance gave her an indefinable look as of some cunning animal. She had on an old straw hat, the color of which had disappeared by reason of its having been alternately washed with rain and dried by the sun, one of those soiled and battered things the ugliness of which seems, like that of some human faces, to be at the same time grotesque and pitiful. Two ribbons knotted under the chin kept this headgear in place, and from beneath its broad brims strayed out tangled locks of hair of uneven lengths and indefinite color, which looked as disagreeable to the eye as they would be harsh to the touch. Her thin form was clothed in a ragged knitted vest, worn into holes at the elbows, to the wool of which clung stalks of straw, as to the hair of animals coming from the stable. Her petticoat of coarse cloth, frayed at the bottom by the brambles, and patched in front over the knees with a piece of blue stuff, showed her naked feet in their worn sabots. Could this woman, who was dried up and knotted like a gnarled vine, with a wild-beast odour about her like that of a wolf, be the mother of that pretty boy with his firm rosy cheeks who seemed so healthy in spite of his infirmity, and was already quite a robust little man?

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She put on a very humble air as I came up, and patted Jean-Baptiste's head with a wrinkled hand, from which, I could not help thinking, he was probably accustomed to receive more blows than caresses. Doubtless her peasant cunning had already scented some possible profit for herself to be got out of my pity for the boy.

"How did he lose that eye?" I asked.

"I don't know, sir—— the little one began by having the small-pox, then his eye got bad, as you see, red at the edges, and then one day it all came away!

"And did you not have it attended to?"

"Lor sir! That would have cost money!"

She spoke with a slow, whining intonation in a voice which she was evidently trying to make sound gentle and affectionate. I noticed that she even stooped to caress Frollo doubtless with the same intention with which she had caressed the child; for the peasants, those hardened sons of the soil, have not the same solicitous tenderness which we town-bred people have for the lower animals. The dog's instinct probably told him that there was no sincerity in these demonstrations of friendship, or perhaps the aristocratic prejudice against beggars natural to a dog accustomed to good society, rendered him secretly hostile to the ragged creature before us; at any rate he sprang aside, thus avoiding the touch of the hand extended towards him, and began to growl.

"What a nice dog!" she said with a false smile.

I asked her other questions, about her husband, her means of existence and her relations.

She replied with an embarrassed air. Her husband, it seemed, had left her six months before, and there had been no news of him since. He was a bad man and a "perfect brute" when he was drunk, breaking everything and beating her and her child unmercifully. She, herself, was a day-labourer, and hired herself out at different farms to work in the fields; but times were hard, and work scarce. Her relations lived in a neighbouring village and although well to do, were not good either to her or her child. Only last evening they had refused her a crust of bread; what increased the poor little one's suffering was that he had not enough to eat, and was so cold at night, when, as often happened, they could not find a stable where they might sleep crouched against the cattle for warmth.

Rent was so dear that they would have to pay three or four francs a month. If she had a little money in hand, she could hire a room for herself and Jean-Baptiste, and buy a bed, two chairs, and a stove for roasting chestnuts, which would keep them warm in winter. Then the boy's eye would be sure to get better. But alas! she had nothing; her hands and her pockets were alike empty!— Surely it was enough to inspire pity to see the sufferings of such a beautiful child as that, who had already begun to learn the catechism in school, when he lost his "first



Emile Bourdelle 1887



eye," who was going to take "his communion" and who said his prayer to "the dear good Virgin" every night like a little angel!—

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I saw what the woman was driving at, and I gave her five francs. She took the piece of money, and held it in her hands as if she felt a sort of pleasure in touching it. Then, sighing, she said reflectively: "What a pity it is that a stove costs seven francs!"

I gave her another forty sous.

But as it was the child in whom I was interested, and not the mother, I offered her to take her and her son to a large neighbouring town, where in one of my previous rides I had noticed a hospital kept by Sisters of mercy.

I proposed to see if it was possible to get Jean-Baptiste, who seemed to require immediate attention, admitted to this hospital. The gentleness and precocious resignation of this poor little creature, who appeared confusedly to feel himself dedicated as it were to suffering, and never dreamt of murmuring against what he doubtless thought to be the universal law—whose future I saw more terrible even than the present;—the mysterious sympathy which my dog seemed to feel for this outcast of fortune (perhaps Frollo remembered having, in some former existence, been a blind man's dog), the accident which had thrown the child across my path at one of those moments when, reviewing the acts of one's past life, one blushes involuntarily at the little good one has done in the world;—the divine peace of nature which filled me with a sentiment of benevolence, and with a great love which embraced all the lesser beings of creation, animals, trees, and even the plants; the beauty of the light which had that morning made me more sensible than I had ever been of the value of that precious gift of sight—everything combined to urge me not to abandon the poor boy. I made the mother mount on the box of my carriage, took Jean-Baptiste to sit beside me, and in little more than twenty minutes we drew up at the hospital of the town of L. Leaving Catabel and her son at the door I asked to see the Lady Superior.

I was shown into a waiting-room and told that Sister Euphrasia would see me directly.

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A minute later Sister Euphrasia entered with her hands hidden in her long sleeves, in that attitude of cold and monastic reserve which the good sisters always assume before a man, and which accorded ill with the fresh and bright youthful look of her face, which seemed quite charming under her white head-dress. I told her of my little *protégé*, and of my wish to save his remaining eye— She interrupted me quickly with the exclamation: "Why, it is that Catabel's boy!"

"Yes, Sister——"

"But do you know who and what his mother is?"

I confessed my ignorance, and then the good sister told me without drawing breath, but not without many blushes, the whole history of the woman. I then learnt that I had just been taking a drive in the company of one of the biggest reprobates in the *canton*, with a lost creature the parentage of whose child was decidedly doubtful, since any one of the woodcutters in the forest might lay claim to it, a woman who was quite frequently found dead drunk at the bottom of a ditch, and who, when she was not begging on the highway, was sure to be robbing some farm or other. You may imagine I was sufficiently shocked at having brought such a horrid creature to Sister Euphrasia. I began to apologise as best I might; but the Lady Superior cut me short at the first words. Years ago I knew a Trappist who, in his capacity as gate-keeper of the Convent, was absolved from the necessity of keeping the vow of silence; the good man spoke enough himself for all the community. Sister Euphrasia also seemed to take considerable pleasure in letting her tongue have free reins, for I solemnly declare she committed that day in the most flagrant way the sin of gossiping which, happily, is only a venial sin.

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She told me all she had learnt in twenty years concerning the population of the neighbourhood. Under the chaste reserve of her words I

could guess at a horrible world of vice, which I had not suspected in these peaceful villages.

I learned a story of lustful, hypocritical, avaricious, mean, cowardly and drunken men, who were insolent towards God, since they no longer feared the Devil; but who would grovel before the sub-prefect; who breathed nothing but hatred against the rich and learnt to read only that they might stuff their heads with revolutionary declamations; of girls who reached the lowest pitch of immorality, who were brazen-faced hussies, seldom at church, but often in the public-house; ignorant of their prayers, but while they were still but children, skilled in all the mysteries of vice. Sister Euphrasia spoke more resignedly than in anger; only a little indignation broke out as she told me some facts which showed most clearly the evil disposition of these people. One man, it happened to be Catabel's brother, had been brought to the hospital with a broken leg. After two months during which the good sisters had bestowed the greatest attention upon him, they succeeded in setting him upon his feet again. It had been quite a fête-day when they saw him walk round the garden for the first time without crutches. Next morning they found that, during the night, the villain had made his escape through the window, carrying off with him all the linen he had been able to lay his hands on from the linen press! And it was doubtless only due to the protection of Saint Joseph that the wretch did not set fire to the place before he left!

The children were as bad as their parents! They had taken in a little orphan and given him food and lodging. They had made quite a pet of him, and he had become the spoilt child of the house. One day when he ought to have been at school, one of the sisters saw him playing truant in the streets. She scolded him, and upbraided him for his disobedience and deception. What do you think the young wretch did? Why, he called the good sister all sorts of abusive names before five or six men who, instead of boxing his ears, all began to laugh.

"And it is the same with all of them!" she went on. "They come to us, they or their wives, in horrible conditions, filthy, covered with

vermin, and eaten up with scrofula, we wash and cleanse them, and dress their sores, and put them in clean white linen scented with lavender. By great care and attention we succeed in restoring to them the health they have lost by debauch and drunkenness— And do you know what they do then?— God knows we don't ask them for gratitude; what we do is only natural and right! But it is rather hard to hear them say when they are cured, as I have heard said more than once, that the hospitals belong to them, and that we are paid to take care of them—paid, my dear sir—we *paid!*”

At this point, Sister Euphrasia grew quite excited, and her hands, quitting the shelter of her large black sleeves, by an eloquent gesture, called Heaven to witness the injustice done to the community. Then, with a deep sigh she concluded :

“Our Lord said : ‘The poor ye have always with you;’ but I think the poor of His time could not have been so wicked as our poor.”

I made no answer, and I thought to myself—that is quite possible, Sister Euphrasia; but on the other hand you and your companions are (if you will pardon me this blasphemy) more holy than the holy women of those times; and that is why I bow with so much respect before the charity, the Divine charity which makes you so great, O little sisters of the poor!

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Meanwhile I hardly knew how to bring back the conversation to the subject of my *protégé*. If only his wretch of a mother had not been there! The Lady Superior obviated the difficulty by saying, after a few moments spent in thought : “Let us go and see the child; after all it is not his fault!” And I shall never forget the august gesture made by Sister Euphrasia, when seeing Catabel approach her, she again hid her hands in her long sleeves, as if to allow as little as possible of her person to come into contact with the impurity of the sinner before her.

After she had made an examination of the diseased eye she was able to tell me that it was less affected than I had supposed, and it was agreed that the child should come every morning to have it dressed

until it was quite cured, which the Sister said it certainly would be.

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Two months later I returned to L. to inquire from Sister Euphrasia as to the progress of Jean-Baptiste.

"He is quite cured," she said, "it was a kind of ophthalmia of which we have much experience here——"

"How glad the mother must be?"

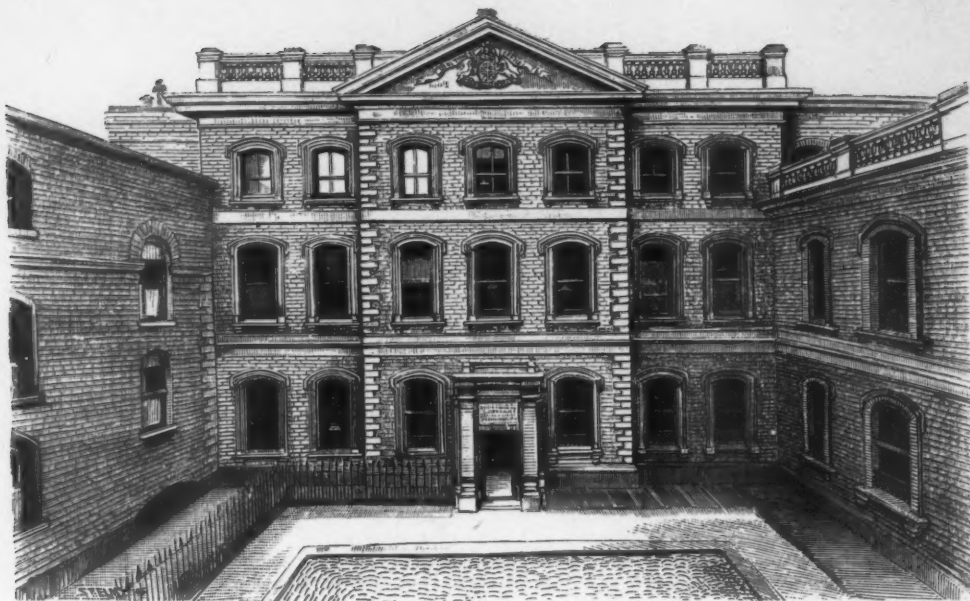
"She glad!—— Ah! my dear sir, any one could see that you little know the people of these parts—— Do you know what she said?——"

Then, imitating to the life the drawling Lorraine accent which prolongs certain vowels, and gives a sort of musical intonation to the end of the phrases, the good Sister said in a way that made me think I was talking to Catabel herself :

"If he had lost his second eye, the youngster might have begged, and we should have made no end of money!"

GEORGE DURUY.





THE CENTENARY OF THE "TIMES"^(*)

The first editor of the *Times*, the man placed by the wise choice of Walter II at the head of the staff, was Thomas Barnes. He was the worthy predecessor, and doubtless the trainer, of John Delane, who was for three years under him.

An incorrect tradition has represented Barnes as not mixing in society, and as writing his articles between two sittings in a bar or between two pipes. Happily for his memory the Greville Memoirs have placed him in his true light. Barnes from the first raised the post of editor of the *Times* to a level whence he influenced, if he did not direct, the events of his time. He was not merely the confidant, but frequently the inspirer and adviser of Lord Lyndhurst, and was styled by Greville "the most powerful man in England."

Like John Delane, his successor, he wrote no articles himself, but the blows he directed were so telling and struck so high that one day he was called upon by Lord Durham, the proudest man in the United Kingdom, who on behalf of King Leopold, recently ascended to the throne

(*) See *Art and Letters* for May, vol. II, page 206.

of Belgium, begged him to stop the attacks made by the *Times* on his government. "When King Leopold's political acts are in accord with my views," Barnes quietly replied, "he will have no occasion to send to me for me to praise him." (*)

During John Delane's illness Mr. Stebbing, a writer of much ability and devotedness, filled a kind of interim.

It was during this interim that an article appeared in the *Times* carrying on a controversy by name with another morning paper, and this was a somewhat serious grievance against Mr. Stebbing, for the affair was much criticised and was quite contrary to the custom of the paper.

The *Times*, indeed, never mentions the name of any daily paper in its columns, for—and this is one of the things which have most irritated the English press against it—it has invariably affected to ignore other papers, and at most, when obliged, speaks of "one of our contemporaries;" and even this is very rare.

In 1877, on Mr. Delane's death, Mr. Thomas Chenery, who had for twenty years written articles of great ability in the *Times*, and was professor of Arabic at Oxford University, succeeded him.

Mr. Chenery was a man of great erudition, great common sense, and unrivalled modesty. He had a very sagacious and observant mind; he was of unlimited devotion, never sparing himself, working without intermission, absorbed in the duties involved in his position; but he had accepted this task at an age when such a burden is not borne with impunity. He died in harness after seven years of an effort which was worthy of him and of which he had shown himself worthy, loved and venerated by all who had come in contact with and appreciated him, but having, it must be said, added nothing to the influence of the *Times* on public opinion.

Mr. G. E. Buckle succeeded him. He has by his side, as assistant, Mr. Capper, and his start in this career bristling with difficulties, warrants the finest expectations.

It would be as awkward for me to praise him as it would be to

(*) Since this article was written the *Times* has celebrated its centenary, and after a lapse of fifty years, King Leopold's son sent his minister at London to Walter III to congratulate him on the centenary.

criticise him, and his start is so recent, seeing that he has occupied his post only three years, that it would be as rash to praise him as to criticise him. What may be already said of Mr. Buckle is that the violent attacks made on him by those whose policy he combats, prove that he is feared, and his ability as an adversary warrants his being regarded as the worthy successor of the men whose names have remained in the memory of all the friends and all the servants of the *Times*.

Mr. Buckle is still young, very young indeed, considering the importance of the position he holds and the influence he already exerts on the course of his country's affairs, for he is not thirty-five. He was a brilliant student at Oxford, that nursery of eminent men who have reflected honour on England in almost all careers. He showed at the last elections great energy, combined with great love of his country and great disdain for the insults and dangers to which his firm attitude exposed him. On the Irish question he has dealt his adversaries terrible blows, and it is very probable that Mr. Parnell will never recover from those received by himself. More than ever, moreover, Mr. John Walter's weighty counsels find an attentive ear in the new editor, and the serious questions entrusted to the defence of the *Times* cannot be better treated than they are by this group of men impressed with their duties more than with their rights.

Alongside Mr. Buckle, Mr. Capper, his *alter ego*, may be reckoned among the existing forces of the *Times*, and during the absence of the chief editor you feel that not a single line jars with the ideas defended by the chief himself.

Mr. John Walter's eldest son, Mr. Arthur Walter, is a cultivated mind who closely studies the problems being solved under his eyes, is inspired by the example which he has before him, and shows a strong predilection for historical studies.

Like all those who may be called upon to influence the conduct of the paper, he has been brought up in respect for its traditions, and those who attribute to him ideas of innovation at which they feign to be uneasy, show that they do not know him. He is perfectly aware that the *Times* has become a definitive institution, and he is too much

imbued with the respect professed by the English for whatever is tradition, to lay a hasty hand, if that right one day reverts to him, on the traditions of the paper. He constantly endeavours to instruct himself, and shows that he understands the gravity of the functions which may be reserved for him.

Beside him is a younger son of Mr. John Walter, Mr. Godfrey Walter,



a young man of twenty-three, who gives the greatest promise, has inherited his father's modest and serious manners, and is another proof that in that family purity of morals and integrity of character are traditional and hereditary virtues.

Mr. J. C. Macdonald is the manager of the paper. The constant work he accomplishes seems to exceed human strength. During more than forty years that he has been on the *Times*, he has not ceased to contribute with all his might to the progress of the paper. It is he who is entrusted with the issue of the weekly edition, the

Mail, the reprints of biographies, parliamentary debates, special articles, and law reports, reprints which are attributed to his initiative. He has a great liking for all improvements, attentively studies all new inventions, and takes a warm interest in questions of electricity. Thanks to him the aspect of the *Times* office at night is truly admirable. The compositors and pressmen move about these large rooms as if in broad daylight, and when about 4 a. m. you enter the machine rooms all glittering with light, and where the splendid machinery works with so giddy a speed that the large sheet is printed and folded before you have had time to go from the roll of paper to the folder, you cannot avoid being strongly impressed, and feeling a wish to clap your hands.

Except the noise of the machines, the rattling of the straps, the regular friction of the wheels, and the crisp and scarcely perceptible rustling of the paper, you do not hear a sound. The workmen, taciturn, serious,

and attentive, perform quietly their task; all is in movement, all at work, nobody rushing, yet without a word being uttered.

The overseers alone walk through the ranks, and without uttering a word help now by a gesture, now by the hand, the work which is going on under their supervision.

Very seldom is a stranger allowed to go through the office at night, and for a long time such a visit was the privilege of the princely guests received by England.

A few years ago there was published a daily edition at a halfpenny, a kind of small *Times*. The infant did not live long. The tree of which it was the fruit refused to protect it with its shade. The bantling did not even bear the name of its parent, it was called the *Summary*, and briefly summarized the articles of the great *Times*, which, however, did nothing whatever to support it.

I have often been asked what is the income of the *Times*. I am quite ignorant of it, have no curiosity for ascertaining it, and am confident that none of those who serve the *Times* cherish such curiosity.

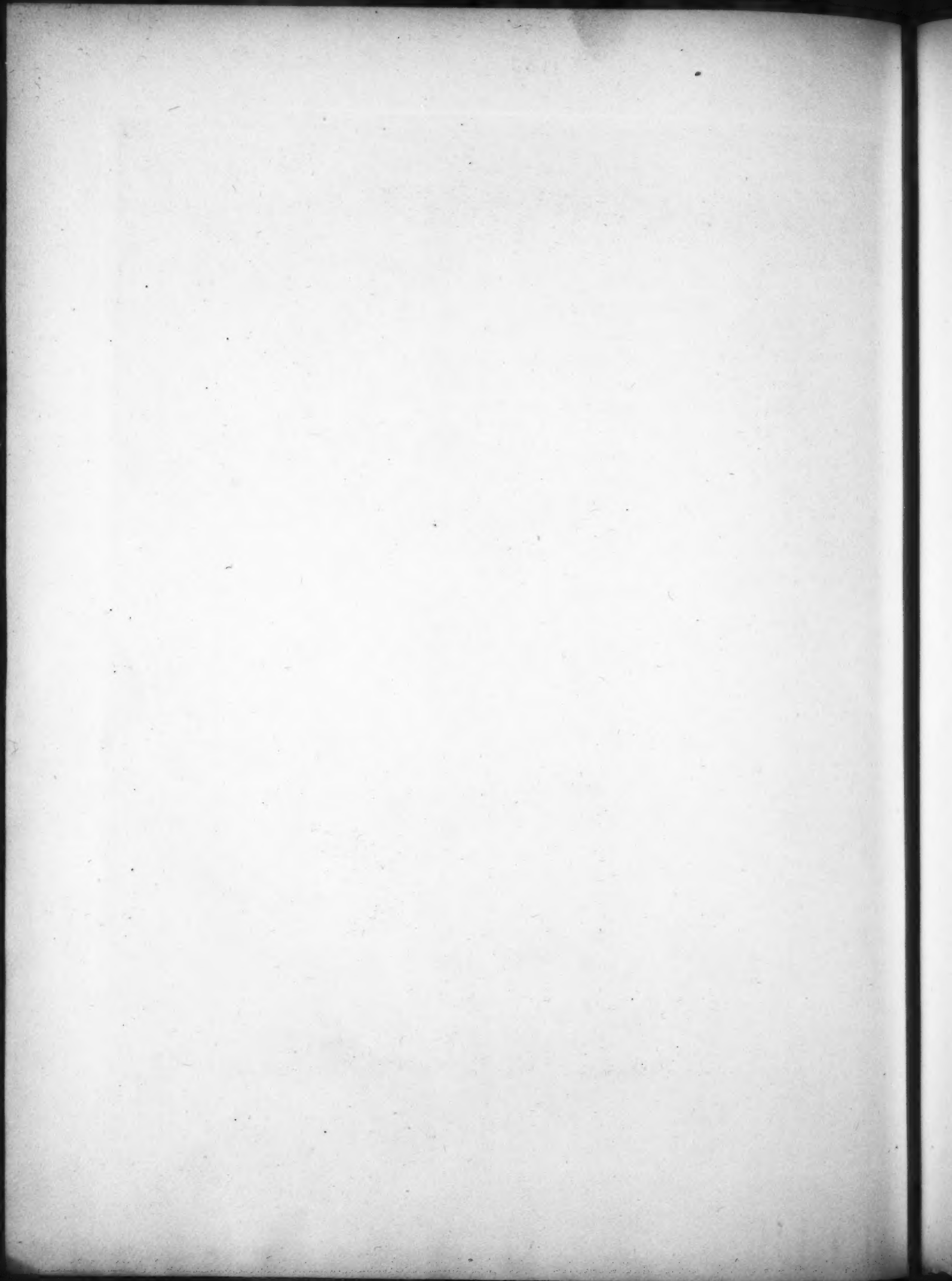
I have often been asked also who writes the leading articles. This, too, is a question which I could not answer. No doubt circumstances gradually make known most of them, but they are known officially only by Mr. John Walter, Mr. Macdonald, the editor and his assistant, and the *Times* somewhat jealously conceals their names. For them especially anonymity is an absolute law.

So true is this that when Mr. John Walter assembles at an annual banquet the staff of the *Times*, no leader writer figures among the guests, so that even those who are on the staff of the paper are not warranted in saying that they know them in an official way.

But by mentioning some of those who, under the reign of John Delane, wrote leading articles, an idea can be given of the distinguished writers who have always been proud of contributing to the *Times*, although the strict anonymity they preserve did not offer them, beyond their own satisfaction, any chance of adding to their reputation. They were Robert Lowe (Lord Sherbrooke) Horsman, M.P. for Liskeard, Knox, police magistrate of Marlborough Street, Leonard Courtney, M.P., formerly Secre-

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tary to the Treasury and now Chairman of Committees, Palgrave Simpson, the dramatist, the Hon. A. Brodrick, afterwards M. P., the Rev. T. Mozley, author of one of the most delightful books on Oxford, the Rev. H. Wace, now principal of King's College, London, Sir W. Anson, Warden of All Souls' College, Abraham Hayward, Q. C., Sir J. Fitzjames Stephen, Sir Henry Maine, Louis Jennings, M. P., Giffen, the economist, now of the Board of Trade, Professor Stuart, M. P. of Cambridge, Sir W. Vernon Harcourt, who wrote letters signed « Historicus, » and many others who have constantly been reckoned among the intellectual glories of England, but the enumeration of whom would tire the reader's patience.

During the same period Oxenford did the dramatic criticisms for the *Times*, Davidson was musical critic, and Sampson City editor.

This was a trio which alone would have sufficed to make the fortune of a newspaper. Oxenford and Davidson died with unblemished reputation, but Sampson, whose opinion was law in financial matters, was suspected towards the end of his career of not being a disinterested judge. He was abruptly superseded, and died a few months afterwards, heart-broken at his disgrace. As for the *Times*, which in such a case could not hesitate, and for the first time saw itself betrayed by one of its staff, it published, the day after this severe but just punishment, an article expressive of regret and outraged dignity by which the public were deeply moved. Since then the money market article has been intrusted to a committee, who are reproached with being too cautious and severe, which prevents its having the same influence on the Stock Exchange which the *Times* formerly possessed. The reply is easy. A paper which has only the public interest in view should not strive for influence on the money market, but for being well informed, and for giving those who follow its opinion true indications and accurate judgments.

The nickname of "The Thunderer" was given to the *Times* from Captain Sterling, who wrote leading articles under Barnes' editorship, and to whom that name had been given. The name clung to the *Times*, which was long spoken of as "The Thunderer."

A few years ago the *Times*, struck with the necessity of early distribution

in the great provincial centres, asked the railway companies to arrange a special morning train to certain districts for newspapers.

The companies having refused, the paper itself engaged a special train in which its distributors took their seats, taking bundles of newspapers which, in passing, they threw on the platforms of stations, where the news-vendors received them. This, of course, was a situation which the other newspapers could not tolerate and their joint complaints were such that the newspaper train now starts every morning at 5 o'clock, carrying distributors for all the papers, who scatter their bundles along the line and endeavour to compete with the provincial press, which, in England as in France, is developing in a threatening way for the papers of the capital.

The Queen reads three newspapers, the *Times*, the *Daily Telegraph* and the *St. James's Gazette*. Until her husband's death she only read the *Times*, but when Prince Albert died the *Daily Telegraph* had articles which impressed her so much that from that moment she has read a copy of the *Daily Telegraph*, which is forwarded to her daily, printed on special paper.

For a long time the *Morning Chronicle* disputed with the *Times* the first place among English newspapers. That journal, however, having fallen into the hands of a barrister, Serjeant Glover, he agreed to become a kind of semi-official organ of the Emperor Napoleon III, that is to say he accepted articles ready made, inspired by the imperial government, which were then quoted in the semi-official papers of the Empire as the expression of public opinion in England.

A lawsuit revealed the affair, and from that moment the *Morning Chronicle* declined, and speedily disappeared. The English public do not like inspired papers and lay stress on the independence of those commissioned to enlighten them.

The *Times* takes special care and pride in the correctness of the printing. Five years ago, Lord Winchilsea made a bet that he would find thirty misprints in six numbers of the *Times*. The stakes were £100 with £10 additional for every blunder more or less. Six numbers of the *Times* were taken at random and three misprints were dis-

covered. Lord Winchilsea lost nearly £400. Three blunders in six numbers were certainly very little, especially considering the speed, of which my readers may have formed an idea, with which the paper is printed. Nevertheless the managers were much mortified when they learnt the result.

This, however, reminds one that two years ago, Mr. Macdonald having introduced a fresh improvement which enabled him to dismiss a portion of the printers, a compositor slipped an indecent sentence into the text of a speech. The affair made a terrible noise. The number was scrambled for at a fabulous price. That day the *Times* printed no extra number. But the manager with a vigorous hand suppressed the revolt, and took measures which made impossible any fresh attempt of this kind.

Alongside this complete and careful organization, the *Times'* interior offers certain surprising imperfections. Thus this newspaper, which receives all the books and publications appearing in England, has not, properly speaking, a library worthy of the name, though merely with the books it receives it could in two years form a modern English library. Again, the leader writers' rooms are on the top floor, at a distance from the editor's room; this arrangement causing a perceptible loss of time in an organization where every minute is of consequence.

It is seldom that the *Times* prints a supplementary number of copies. On a recent occasion, however, the publication of a document which made a real sensation—I mean Mr. Parnell's letter—the almost imperious demands of the public, forced the paper to print several hundred thousand copies, and even then it sold for a guinea, the number, enormous as it was, being so inadequate.

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In Europe, the *Times* has special correspondents in all the capitals, and these, in their turn, have correspondents who keep them posted up in the smaller centres. At St. Petersburg it has Mr. Dobson, at Madrid Mr. Clarke, at Berlin Mr. Lowe, at Vienna Mr. Brinsley Richards, at Constantinople Mr. George Guaraccino, at Rome Mr. Stillman. It has also

correspondents at Athens, Sofia, Brussels, Alexandria, and in America, in India, China, Japan, South America, and all the English colonies, as well as in Burmah. It sends correspondents wherever there happens an event worthy of close observation. Special correspondents watch military and scientific movements. A correspondent of the *Times* fell by the side of Gordon, while others have died on the battle-field, or carried away by disease in the exercise of their mission.

I should be justly twitted with presumption if I ventured to pass judgment on colleagues who are still in harness, and even my eulogiums would seem affected. I should, however, be failing in an historical duty if I did not in a few lines trace physiognomies which I have known, and if I did not speak of Hardman, Charles Austin, Lawrence Oliphant, and William Russell. I should also add M. Prévost-Paradol, although many years have passed since his lamentable end. From 1868 to 1870, until the accession of the Olivier ministry, Prévost-Paradol sent the *Times* incisive letters on the imperial policy, and he is far from being the only Frenchman coveting or obtaining the honour of writing in that paper. Unfortunately for himself, Prévost-Paradol gave up the correspondence of the *Times* when the accession of a so-called liberal cabinet gave him a plea for quitting the Opposition and entering the ranks of the party of placemen. Had he made a short effort he would have found himself among the leaders of the victorious opposition, and would have had the two-fold satisfaction of witnessing the fall of the Empire, which he apparently yearned for, and of realizing those dreams of comfort to which he sacrificed his independence and his life.

While he was in the Crimea, whence he sent letters to the *Times* of which I have already spoken, Billy Russell was a combatant, the expression may be used, for he was constantly on horseback at the outposts of the allied armies or in the ranks of the French army. He had a passion for that army, and, whenever he could, he proclaimed its achievements. The French officers reciprocated his attachment, and he made lasting friendships among them.

When, therefore, the war of 1870 broke out, Russell, full of recollections of the Crimean war, presented himself, still as correspondent

of the *Times*, to Marshal Lebœuf, accredited by his paper to follow the French army. Marshal Lebœuf, by the application of a general measure which will long weigh on his memory, refused to admit Russell, for it proves that he had deliberately deceived his country by pretending to be ready at the very moment when he felt that he would have defeats to conceal, not victories to announce. It was a serious blunder even from the stand-point of events. If Russell had accompanied the French army he would have been attached to the headquarters of the Emperor Napoleon III himself, for he was well acquainted with him personally.

His independent judgment would have rendered great service to the Emperor, surrounded by mere echoes of his own opinions, and I have always been convinced, for I know Russell's opinion, that one of the most decisive blunders of that campaign would not have been committed if William Russell had been there.

In any case the French army would have found in the columns of the *Times*, where there necessarily appeared only letters dated from the German army, an ardent and sincere defender, a powerful pen which would have prevented Europe from regarding France beforehand as certain to be crushed, and from folding its arms before a disaster which it believed to be irreparable.

I dwell on this point because during the recent mobilization experiment I saw the same thing go on. I saw the correspondents of foreign papers excluded from the ranks, while French correspondents boasted of having acted as detectives, and introduced in their important mission methods which would be a misfortune for journalism if they were tolerated.

Seeing admission into the French army refused, Russell presented himself at the headquarters of the King of Prussia in his capacity of accredited correspondent of the *Times*. The King of Prussia received him with great eagerness, and congratulated himself on having beside him a correspondent who would not allow public opinion to be misled with respect to the German army. Russell accordingly followed, in the German army, the corps placed under the command of the Crown Prince; Charles Brackenbury was correspondent of the *Times* attached to the army corps

under the command of General Werder; Lawrence Oliphant, who had also been refused by Marshal Lebœuf, was attached to the headquarters of the Duke of Mecklenburg; Major Pemberton remained with Prince Frederick Charles; Kelly and Charles Austin, as well as several others, were correspondents on the move, who went according to circumstances now to one point and now to another.

Each of them was admirably mounted, amply provided with cash, commissioned to spare nothing to insure speedy transmission of news, and this *élite* corps itself paid tribute to the sanguinary chances of war, for Major Pemberton, who had left the army besieging Metz, fell mortally wounded at Sedan.

The Duke of Mecklenburg has often related that during the greatest battles he was forced to fetch back by force into the ranks Lawrence Oliphant, who posted himself in front, amid the hail of projectiles, on horseback, covered by a large cloak and a broad-brimmed hat, and who took notes "just as in a ball-room."

It was Russell who witnessed the battle of Sedan.

When all was lost in that sanguinary hollow which will figure among the infernal circles of a future Dante, Russell, on horseback, his eyes full of tears, his head bare, bowed slowly before Napoleon III, who was starting in an open carriage and under good escort for captivity.

He who was still Emperor looked at him deliberately, made a supreme effort to keep back a tear which was about to fall from his expressionless countenance, and threw into one solemn farewell all the grief, anguish, and agony which at that moment assailed the mind of the vanquished soldier.

Russell, without dismounting, followed by his servant, passed through the battle-field in order to reach Belgium. In a field, the back leaning against an enormous beet plant which prevented his body from falling flat, he perceived a poor linesman having on his knees the head of a Zouave which a cannon ball had severed from the trunk and thrown on the soldier's lap. Has Dante ever conceived a more horrible picture?

Russell reached the Belgian frontier, took the first train, left his horses in the servant's charge, got to Ostend, and arrived the next day, Sunday evening, an eye witness of this great disaster, in the *Times* office. He

there wrote that painful historical account which is to this day the finest that has been written on the battle of Sedan.

Next day he started for Ostend, remounted his horse, and passed into French country, where the Germans, who were marching on Paris, had left an exasperated population on their track. These two men, their horses galloping through the country, were constantly taken for Prussians, and only by escaping as by miracle from constant danger of death could they rejoin the rear.

Russell thus watched the siege and witnessed the entry of the Germans into Paris. The duties were divided. Russell witnessed the Longchamps review, Lawrence Oliphant waited on the Place de l'Étoile, Kelly went through the Champs-Élysées and the avenues, and four special reporters observed the aspect of the quarters outside the area of occupation.

The Emperor and the Crown Prince were to make their entry on March 3rd, two days later, to be received in the French capital by their own army. But the next day, March 2nd, the Comte de Pontécoulant, then « chef de cabinet » to Jules Favre, wrote the following note :

“The ratifications have been exchanged at Versailles— The Prussians evacuate Paris to-morrow morning— The King was to make his solemn entry to-morrow— He is disagreeably surprised to see us settle the affair to-day.”

The Bordeaux Assembly, in fact, had listened to the patriotic adjurations of M. Thiers, who begged it to spare Paris the prolongation of the stay of the Prussians, and it thereby deprived him whom M. de Pontécoulant styles King of Prussia, of the solemn entry which he was preparing.

The entry of the Germans over, Russell, still on horseback, followed by his faithful servant, went through Paris to get to the Gare du Nord, where a train was in readiness. Blond, covered with dust, wearing a kind of military cap strapped to his jacket, and having in his button-hole a foreign decoration, he was taken for a Prussian, hooted by the mob, had stones thrown at him, and amid real danger reached the Gare du Nord where was the general muster.

It was 2 p. m. He took the notes of the correspondents and jumped

with Kelly into the train which started for Calais. He was at work from Paris to Calais, embarked there on a steamer which was ready waiting for him, took at Dover the train in readiness, and arrived at 10 o'clock at the *Times* office. The paper published next day in seven columns, accompanied by a long commentary, the most complete, accurate, fair, and moving account yet published of this entry into Paris, an account which will have to be consulted by all future historians anxious for the truth.

I find in this account an unknown or forgotten anecdote, which would confront future historians as a great psychological problem if chance had not enabled me to solve it.

The entry of the Germans was made, as is known, under the chief command of Duke Ernest of Saxe-Coburg Gotha, the senior of the German reigning princes present. The Duke was surrounded by the largest and most brilliant staff that could be grouped round him. The army, which had been enjoined perfect prudence and calmness, was stopped by the mob which had collected from all the faubourgs and the suburbs. The staff was long stationary on the level of the Rue de Presbourg on the right, and the Rue de Tilsitt on the left.

On the Rue de Presbourg side, in the front rank and the fourth file, was a cuirassier dressed in the white Prussian uniform, the spiked helmet on his head. He remained a long time stooping, his large moustache alone being visible under the lowered visor of the helmet. Suddenly he raised his head and took a long look at the Arc de Triomphe. Then his spurs gradually touched the flanks of his horse, he left the ranks, saluted the officers as he passed, turned to the left, and disappeared in the direction of the Porte de Neuilly. It was Bismarck. For some years I wondered why the Chancellor had not entered Paris, and was quite puzzled.

A few months ago I was speaking of this to one of my friends.

"Why," said he, "I can clear up your perplexity. I knew this episode and once thinking Prince Bismarck inclined to talk and being near him I could not resist asking him for an explanation of the mystery.

"He reflected a moment and said: 'Ah yes, I remember. I thought matters were going to be spun out, and that there was no fear of accident.

As I was full of work, having to send very important dispatches to the four corners of Europe, I resolved not to wait any longer, and I went home, where my secretaries, whom I had ordered to remain, were impatiently awaiting me, and were much surprised to learn that I had contented myself with looking at the Arc de Triomphe, of which I took a long survey, in fact, as a very interesting thing not to be seen again.' I have often laughed since on comparing this explanation with the strange ideas which had been inspired in me by the reading of this incident, which I am sure would one day have furnished many pages to the historians of the 19th century.

Have I stated that during the siege M. J. J. Weiss, who had remained at Paris and was editing his paper, had much perplexed the members of the Government of National Defence by the accuracy and celerity of his outside information, the source of which the government could not explain? Yet it was very simple.

Mr. Washburne, who was, as I have already said, the neutral and official intermediary during the siege, and who has since been so stupidly calumniated, regularly received the *Times* among the papers forwarded to him. Of course he had taken a formal engagement to communicate the contents to nobody, and he read it only in the evening in his bedroom, where he kept it, to lay it by next day. But M. J. J. Weiss had arranged with Mr. Washburne's man-servant. Every evening the latter, entering his master's room to close the shutters and put out the light, took the *Times*, jumped into a cab, took it to Weiss, who leisurely looked it through, and the next morning, re-entering his master's room and before opening the shutters, he put back the paper in its place.

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I should leave a real gap in this long and incomplete account if I did not speak in more detail of Lawrence Oliphant, whose brief career among the special correspondents of the *Times* has left such brilliant recollections.

Lawrence Oliphant was on the *Times* rather more than two years, from the beginning of the war to the end of 1872. He is one of the

liveliest, ablest, and most active minds that I know. He has great talents as a writer. He possesses inexhaustible humour, unwavering energy, a singularly calm courage, a thirst for seeing, understanding, and scrutinising which nothing can appease. He has published, besides his newspaper letters, which were read with avidity, magazine articles and



works of philosophy, satire, and fiction which enjoy increasing public favour. A member of parliament, he suddenly left his country after a somewhat stormy life, to recruit himself in America among a new sect of which he soon became the head and mainstay.

Re-entering Europe by a kind of mysterious intuition at the moment when such serious events were about to happen, he presented himself on behalf of the *Times* to Marshal Leboeuf, who refused to admit him into the French army. He then went and swelled the number of correspondents whom the German army eagerly welcomed, and watched the war with a kind of heroic stoicism which very frequently, as I have said, obliged the commander of the army corps whose operations he was witnessing to protect him by force against the dangers to which he exposed himself, not unconsciously but heedlessly.

He belongs by his rash and mystical temperament to the class of Gordons. He was secretary of the English embassy which was near being massacred at Yeddo, and still bears the marks of serious wounds. He witnessed the Hungarian rising, Schamyl's struggle, Garibaldi's expedition, and was everywhere in short where a man, a race, or a people furnished him the spectacle of a conflict or attempt at liberation. He is treated sometimes as mad, sometimes as sublime, but he goes through the world with a mind absorbed in numberless visions which prevent his seeing the grimaces made by human ignorance or stupidity as he passes. Just as he went on the *Times* by a sort of uncontrollable impulse at

the outset of the war, he left it when the war was over, the post of correspondent not offering his insatiable curiosity and passion for the unforeseen the nourishment which alone had kept him in the ranks.

He now lives at Haipha in Syria, at the foot of Mount Carmel, whence he dated the volume dictated by his wife which was to contain the doctrine destined to transform mankind. There, in that remote corner of the mystical East, where scarcely a ship penetrates, he lost the adorable and adored helpmeet whom he had chosen in the fulness of his liberty, under the imperative impulse of his heart, and who had accepted him with a fervent enthusiasm which death alone interrupted. He thus lives in this solitude of Haipha, his heart in the tomb which he watches, and his head in the infinite of which he fancies he has sounded the depths and grasped the mysteries.

From time to time he appears in the world, bringing a fresh book, then effaces himself like a meteor, leaving behind it a sparkling trail. We have often tried to broach the subject of his meditations, but have never been able to carry very far this futile attempt. I found that his doctrine, beneath its great love of mankind, and under the guise of pity, had pride for its basis, and contempt for men as its summit. To this scornful and bitter philosophy I prefer the humbler doctrine of Him who bore in Himself the love of the human race. I hold that the world must be loved even in its saddest exceptions, that this rule must be carried even to loving those who are embittered against you, and whose attacks are an involuntary homage. What man would not rather crush you by his superiority than try and bespatter you by his insults?

Oliphant was my master in the science of politics, which he sometimes judged in an unexpected way, but the mechanism of which he marvellously dissected. I entered on the career under his orders and at his instance. His great friendship for me, of which I am still proud, instructed and directed me with striking solicitude, and my daily relations with M. Thiers from the beginning of 1871 until his fall, and nearly till his death, cooperated in this training, to which practice daily brings its indispensable complement.

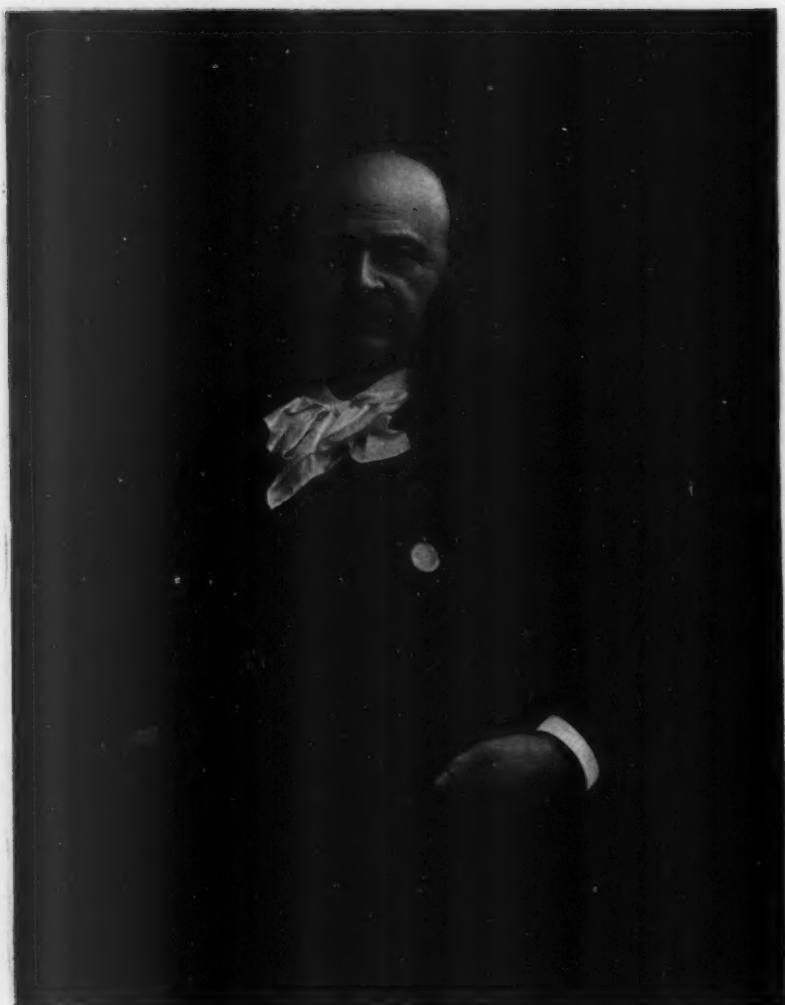
Among Mr. Lawrence Oliphant's predecessors at Paris may be men-

tioned O'Reilly, the man who denounced the plot against banking and commerce, and O'Meagher, who under the Empire filled the post in an honourable way, had a calm and sagacious, modest and clear sighted mind, inspiring universal esteem and leaving behind him the most pleasing recollections.

Charles Austin, a brilliant student at Oxford and fellow of a college there, was a shooting star which dazzled through space for a moment without pausing on the way. But the very swiftness of his perception made long stays unbearable to him, and he emerged at the other end of the continent just when he was supposed to be busied in the solution of some local problem. He was the only correspondent who witnessed from beginning to end the formidable and fantastic insurrection of Carthage, witnessed it in Carthage itself, and kept the world informed of its vicissitudes. But for him neither contemporary Europe nor history would have any authentic materials for understanding or relating an event which seems depicted by the joint brushes of Ribera, Goya, and Holbein.

Hardman must also be mentioned, to whom I was assistant during his last stay as correspondent at Paris. He was a kind, polite, dignified man, entirely absorbed in his duties. He wrote in a simple, clear style, very readable, without slovenliness or exaggeration. When he had time to revise his letters and to reflect, they were models of simplicity and good taste. When pressed for time he distrusted himself, was vexed at the looseness of his style, hesitated in his judgments, and left the reader to draw the conclusions. He had made the Morocco campaign with the Spaniards bravely, like a soldier-writer alternately using pen and sword, and the officers of the army saw in him a brother-in-arms who wrote day by day, with scrupulous accuracy, the history of their exploits. Death snatched the pen from his hands in October, 1874, and he fell a victim to that Minotaur styled the daily special wire, which strangles its prey between an event which breaks out and the electric pile which waylays them.

It was on May 4th, 1874, that the *Times* inaugurated its special wire, which works from 9 p. m. to 3 a. m. This was quite a new mode of



Chalot phot.

M. DE BLOWITZ



corresponding for Hardman. You must hand in your copy smoking hot to the telegraph waiting for it. The reader who peruses you early in the morning must not have the impression of a composition which has had time to cool on the way, unless you wish him to ask why you have substituted electricity for the post. With few exceptions this is the problem which every evening you have to solve. When this transformation in correspondence occurred, Mr. Hardman was nearly sixty-two, an age when it is difficult to change a method pursued during a laborious life, and the efforts imposed on him by this new plan of correspondence, and the cerebral tension it involved at late hours of the night, hastened an end which seemed to everybody premature, cutting short an existence which had had its moments of lustre, and which had remained unblemished.

He was scarcely dead when the pronunciamiento of Martinez Campos and the Proclamation of Alfonso XII gave me in the eyes of our chief a title to the honour of succeeding him.

Soon afterwards, in May, 1875, appeared the letter which drew public attention to the aggressive projects against disarmed France, which were attributed to the Germans.

I had started for Marseilles as soon as it was written and before it appeared, not returning till a fortnight after its publication. First the French papers, which had not understood it, and next the German papers, which had understood it, attacked the author of this letter with unprecedented violence. On my return I called on the Duc Decazes, who had said "if these projects are not unmasked in time we are lost." I met him coming out of his office and just going to enter his carriage to repair to Versailles.

He came to me smiling and dignified with a proud air and outstretched hand.

"Ah, my poor friend," he said to me, "what a capital umbrella you make; it is raining on you in torrents, and I have not felt a drop."

This was all. I entered his carriage and we talked of current topics. I had not a moment's resentment against him for this little phrase in the style of a Roman Emperor who smilingly sees the wild beast rush on the

Christian whom he has forced into the arena, just as I have never had a grudge against the excellent M. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, whom I had advised through a high Turkish diplomatist to propose arbitration on the Turco-Greek conflict, who had adopted this idea, had submitted it to the Powers, and then blamed me for stealing his secrets because I was the first to divulge the project; but I have even now a bitter feeling at a remark against me which fell from the lips of M. Duclerc, and I notice it here because I do not wish to disappear without noticing it, nor to notice it when M. Duclerc is no more.

My relations with M. Duclerc dated a good way back and had always been very agreeable. When he indirectly succeeded M. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, I called on the new minister to congratulate him. The interview was very cordial, and I had a conversation with him which he empowered me to publish and which made a great stir. M. Duclerc objected only to a single word which I had inaccurately quoted in that interview (1).

On this second visit I told M. Duclerc, and proved it to him, that I knew in all its details the treaty which he was endeavouring to get signed by the Bey of Tunis. But I reminded him at the same time that the *Times*, with rare loyalty, had divulged engagements respecting Tunis taken at Berlin by Lord Salisbury with M. Waddington, revelations which had materially affected the political attitude of England, and that consequently, my duty not being contrary to it, I should refrain from publishing what I knew, so as not to prejudice the success of the negotiations.

"But you must see," I added, "at what point my silence must stop, and I only ask you to give me timely warning, so that I may be the first to publish the information."

The matter was thus arranged. I maintained profound silence when, a few weeks later, on going to Rouen one Sunday, I read in the *Figaro* a short paragraph which gave summarily but correctly the chief details of the Treaty. I saw that the Quai d'Orsay had talked. I stopped at Mantes, took the first train for Paris, hastened to the Quai d'Orsay, and not finding M. Duclerc, wrote him a letter to say that I was released from my

(1). I put "I will not be the friend—instead of 'the satellite' of M. Gambetta," thinking the latter word did not sound well from a French Prime Minister.

voluntary promise, and I gave the news, which appeared the next day. This publication, of course, somewhat impaired the effect of the communication made to the Chamber, and some days afterwards M. Duclerc, his dignity nettled, ventured to say to one of my colleagues, speaking of me : "I reproach him with having sought to wrong my country."

This ill word, which constituted an ill act, is the only calumny which has keenly affected me during my whole career, and I record it here to get it out of my mind which is saddened by it.

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I have endeavoured to show the reader, in the foregoing pages, the origin and successive developments of a newspaper which is at this moment one of the most powerful levers of universal public opinion. For a long time the *Times* has applied the result of its efforts to attain cheapness of production not to increasing its profits, but to facing the new burdens imposed on it by modern transformations. The paper alone, with its two large sheets, represents more than twice the total expense of the largest French paper, and the mere cost of its telegraphic correspondence exceeds in its turn the entire outlay of the most lavish of French daily papers.

The power of the *Times* is not in what it gains, but in what it spends, and those who have the chief guardianship of it have long considered it as a national force entrusted to their hands, rather than as a source of advantages placed at their disposal.

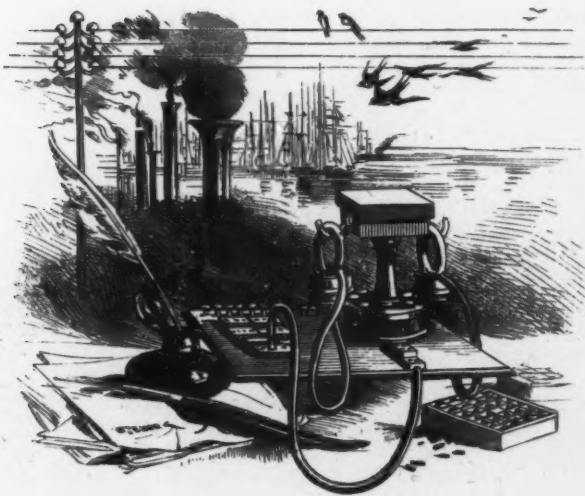
Whatever may be said, its intervention in domestic affairs is an almost certain cause of success, and the valiant support it gave at the last elections to the admirable party of Unionists who march under the leadership of the Marquis of Hartington and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain had a large share in causing a political current powerful enough to rally the majority of the nation.

Abroad, as in England itself, enlightened opinion, the only one worthy of consideration, acknowledges the sincerity of its attacks and the independence of its eulogiums, and there is not a single Englishman, even among those combatted by it, who does not regard the *Times* as part of the pride and force of his country. It is a force indeed for a country, this

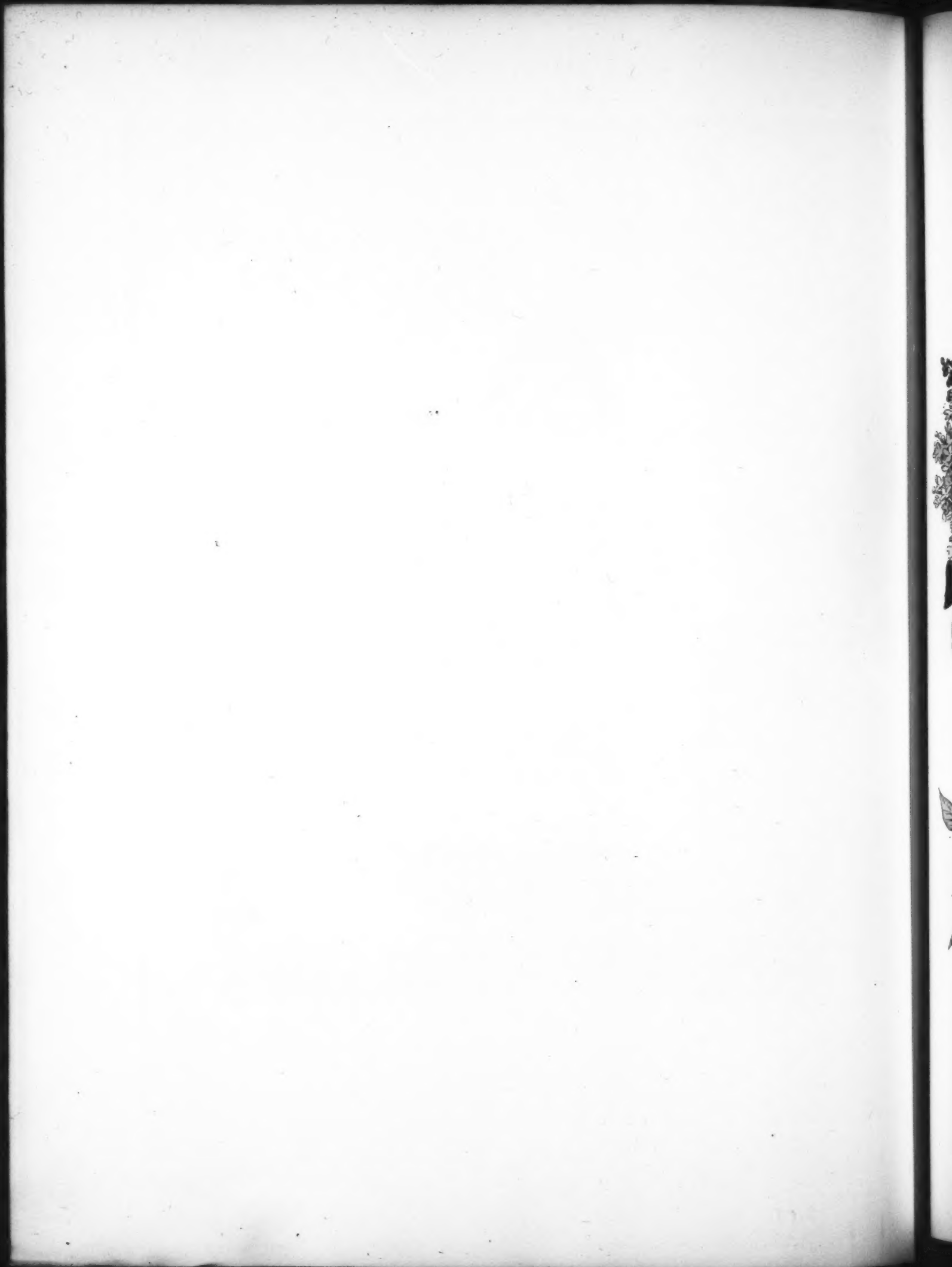
ascendency of a newspaper over the opinion of the world, and an essay much graver and more consoling than the pages which have just been written would be one explaining and discussing the causes which have brought the *Times* to the position of a moral power which it has now gained.

Some of those who have had the honour of serving it may for a time have stood out with a certain relief from the mass of the common work, but they have never ceased borrowing their chief lustre from the flag under whose shadow they were fighting, and their names have been effaced from the memory of man as soon as they have ceased to be associated with that of the *Times*.

BLOWITZ.









VOUS N'AIMEZ PAS

ÉLÉGIE

Paroles de
M. PAUL BOURGET.

Musique de
M. H. BEMBERG.

CHANT

And^{te} con moto *Dolce*

PIANO

And^{te} con moto *p* *Ritenu^{to}* *p*

Si les ro - ses pou -

vaient nous rendre le bai - ser Que no - tre bou - che

M. H. Bemberg

vient sur leur bon - che po - ser; Si les li - las pou - vaient,

et les grands lys com - pren - dre La tris - tes - se dont nous remplit leur parfum

ten - dre; Si l'immo - bi - le ciel

et la mouvan - te mer Pou - vaient - sen - tir - combien leur

char - - me nous est cher;

Ritenu.

This system contains the first line of music. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats. The piano accompaniment is in bass clef. The lyrics are 'char - - me nous est cher;'. The piano part features triplet figures in the right hand and single notes in the left hand. A 'Ritenu.' marking is placed above the piano part.

Si tout ce que l'on aime, en cet.te vie é - tran - - ge,

p

This system contains the second line of music. The vocal line continues with the lyrics 'Si tout ce que l'on aime, en cet.te vie é - tran - - ge,'. The piano part continues with a similar accompaniment. A piano dynamic marking '*p*' is present at the beginning of the piano part.

Pouvaient don.ner une à - - me à - - notre âme en é - chan - ge!..

Cresc.

This system contains the third line of music. The vocal line continues with the lyrics 'Pouvaient don.ner une à - - me à - - notre âme en é - chan - ge!..'. The piano part features a crescendo, marked with '*Cresc.*' and '*f*'.

Mais le ciel, mais la mer, - - Mais les frè - les li -

Più animato. *Dimin.*

p

This system contains the fourth line of music. The vocal line continues with the lyrics 'Mais le ciel, mais la mer, - - Mais les frè - les li -'. The piano part continues with triplet figures. The system is marked with '*Più animato.*' and '*Dimin.*'. A piano dynamic marking '*p*' is present at the end of the piano part.

p *f*

las, Mais

p *Riten.* *pp* *f*

Più animato. *Allargando*

les ro - ses, et toi, et toi, chère, vous n'aimerez pas!

Più animato. *Allargando* *Suivez.*

Dimin.





The old belief in the evil eye must be the most baseless of superstitions! No fever struck me down within the next few days, in spite of the baleful looks flashed at me by the little Italian whenever we chanced to meet.

It was all over between us, I plainly saw, from the way in which she passed by without returning my friendly "Good morning," turning to hurl wrath and disdain at me in eloquent silence, from fierce eyes that seemed to justify Carlton's dictum as to her being "a good hater." Our reconciliation was brought about by a strange—almost a tragic incident; an outburst of feeling beyond her control; a sudden tempest shaking her soul in my presence, as it would surely have done in the presence of any other who had crossed her path at the supreme moment.

Mademoiselle Mouche had no doubt boasted that she would find some means of thawing the frigid Englishman, and, unlikely as it seemed, she ended

(*) See *Art and Letters* for May, 1888, vol. II, p. 137.

by gaining her point. Carlton's young manhood, austere and ice-bound as we deemed it, was not proof against every temptation, only the temptation, to move him, had to be of a certain blond, diaphanous, ethereal kind; to appeal to his æsthetic sense by such outward signs as a long slim neck, a pair of mournful eyes, cheeks slightly hollow, and a skin of pearly pallor. Such was the armament of the dangerous ally Mademoiselle Mouche had enlisted by the time we met again for the evening meal. Wymer ushered in the pair with a laughing aside to Carlton, whom he was fond of "chaffing" about his Florentine and Pre-Raphaelite leanings. "Well, my dear fellow, we have found something in your line at last! We have brought you a Botticelli! Doesn't she look more as if she had stepped out of some faded fresco than out of a green room? She's Irma Michon—a friend of Mouche's,—thank Heaven, Mouche is rather more substantial herself."

The operatic saint, her fair face shadowed by a mist of pale gold hair, sat down and took part in our rustic meal under a fire of more or less admiring glances from the men, and of sharp criticisms—adverse, of course—from the women. She herself said mighty little, being quite an ideal specimen of the type of woman familiarly called "a stick,"—but she had a curious way of laughing every now and then at nothing in particular, and her laugh, clear and crystalline, yet with an indescribable ring of melancholy in its musical ripple, thrilled Carlton visibly. He was attracted at first sight, at any rate from his artistic side, by the poetry of her youthful fragility.

At dessert he slipped a little drawing block out of his pocket, and began a furtive sketch of the enchantress.

"Bah!" cried Mademoiselle Mouche, sending a pellet of bread at him across the table, "you needn't be in such a hurry. There's a time for everything. You shall have plenty of chances of painting her portrait, and mine too, if you like!" Whereupon Wymer laughingly invited him to coffee with the ladies in his rooms, and the blond vision, seconding the young man's invitation by a long, langorous glance at Carlton, floated harmoniously away from our tobacco-smoke as if borne upon clouds, one supple arm entwining Mouche's waist.

"Well, upon my word! If that isn't a bag of bones!" exclaimed Boulotte, as soon as the door closed.

Grelu made a declamatory gesture that conveyed no hint of disapproval, and murmured something about "morbidezza," but was promptly talked down by his spouse.

"What do you say?—Yes, I grant you, there is a sort of distinction about her—but a broomstick would look plump beside her! She's like two boards nailed together! Fancy a nudge from that skeleton's elbow! It would run you through like a spit!"

"Carlton seemed to be of a different way of thinking! He went off in a tremendous hurry!"

"I should think so," said the Jordaens of Barbizon, the impetuous painter of "Feasts of Lucullus." "And do you know why? She is a sort of personification of Consumption. Consumption and the Spleen are the two abstractions dearest to an Englishman's heart. Can you wonder that English art is unhealthy—that it has become a kind of phthisis on canvas?"

The next morning, about ten o'clock, I saw Carlton getting into an open carriage he had ordered from Fontainebleau. He placed himself beside Wymer, opposite his fair-haired sylph, and I saw that he was lavish of little attentions to her, wrapping her up warmly, with an air of happy ownership, for the morning was cold, though a brilliant sunshine began to drink up the heavy dew. His usually impassive face was full of an animation I had never seen in it before, and for the first time I noticed that he was a very handsome man. The two ladies seemed to be quite of my opinion. Both were coquetting audaciously with him. They were very well dressed, in the style an Englishman calls "good form"—dark cloth gowns of a semi-masculine cut—straight collars—white waistcoats, small felt hats,—the whole enhanced by a thousand little soberly elegant details which were catalogued with secret wrath by the womankind assembled on the steps, in crumpled *peignoirs* and down at heel slippers. As the carriage disappeared into the blue mist that hung about the forest, Mademoiselle Mouche turned round and waved a significant farewell to the "Mushroom" and Grelu. The gesture said as plainly as words: "I've been one too many for him!"

The two applauded noisily, amid a hubbub of comments which, beginning at the inn door, followed the carriage down the village street, till it rolled out of sight between the tree trunks of Bas-Bréau. The way lay past Mère Fouchard's house, and I asked myself with a sort of pitying curiosity what Faëlla must have thought of the sight. Pride or anger had kept her from coming out like the rest to see the ladies go by. I strolled down to Carlton's hostess, and asked where she was. The old woman threw up her arms in the air, and answered contemptuously :

"There's no knowing where she may be! Up to some mischief somewhere, you may be sure! Why can't she stay and help me with my work, or mend her clothes, which are all in rags? You'll see that child will come to a bad end! As I tell her, idleness is the mother of all vice. But then, her master isn't half strict enough. How can a young man like that look after a girl? He has given her a holiday. Well—— well—— He certainly won't want her to-day!" The old peasant finished with a knowing twinkle in her eye, and a smile that accented all the furrows in a skin tanned into the semblance of Spanish leather by time and exposure.

"I don't blame him, for one! He takes few enough holidays. He works like a slave," continued Madame Fouchard, making most picturesque havoc among her words. "In my young days there were none of those old heads on young shoulders. It was all fun and frolic from year's end to year's end. Of course he's a foreigner, and comes from a country where there's no such thing as amusement and where they seem to count their very words : 'Good day, Madame Fouchard,' when he arrives. 'Good bye till next year, Madame Fouchard,' when he goes away. That's about the length of his talks with *me*! However—he pays like a gentleman!"

I left Madame Fouchard to continue her critique of Hugh Carlton for her own edification. Once set going there was apparently no reason that the flood should ever run dry. It was time for *déjeuner*, after which meal, I took my daily saunter in the forest. On these limpid autumn days I loved to wander haphazard, my ears alert to the almost inaudible murmur of dead leaves, floating downwards from the trees, or borne

along like russet butterflies across the heathery carpet. This was the only sound I heard sometimes the whole afternoon, saving, perhaps, the cry of a bird, or the hurried rustle of an adder, gliding away beneath the withered grasses. But to-day the forest held a very prosaic surprise in reserve for me.

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Tally-ho! Tally-ho!

I was under the splendid beech that shades the "Carrefour de l'Épine" when these excited cries burst upon my ears, and I paused, startled by the thud of furious galloping, and the crashing of broken branches; it sounded as if the thickets round me were being torn away by an avalanche.

Tally-ho-o-o!

Through the silvery colonnade of the beech-stems and the spreading screen of their drooping branches, I caught a gleam of blue that was not the placid ether of the skies, but a mass of moving tumultuous azures. It was nothing more extraordinary, however, than the uniform of the *Chasseur* regiment quartered at Fontainebleau. The horses dashed over the rocks, plunged into the gorges, describing frantic circles in pursuit of a game fleetier than beast or bird, that whirled like snow-flakes in the wind. In short, I found myself in the very thick of a paper-chase, hemmed in on every side.

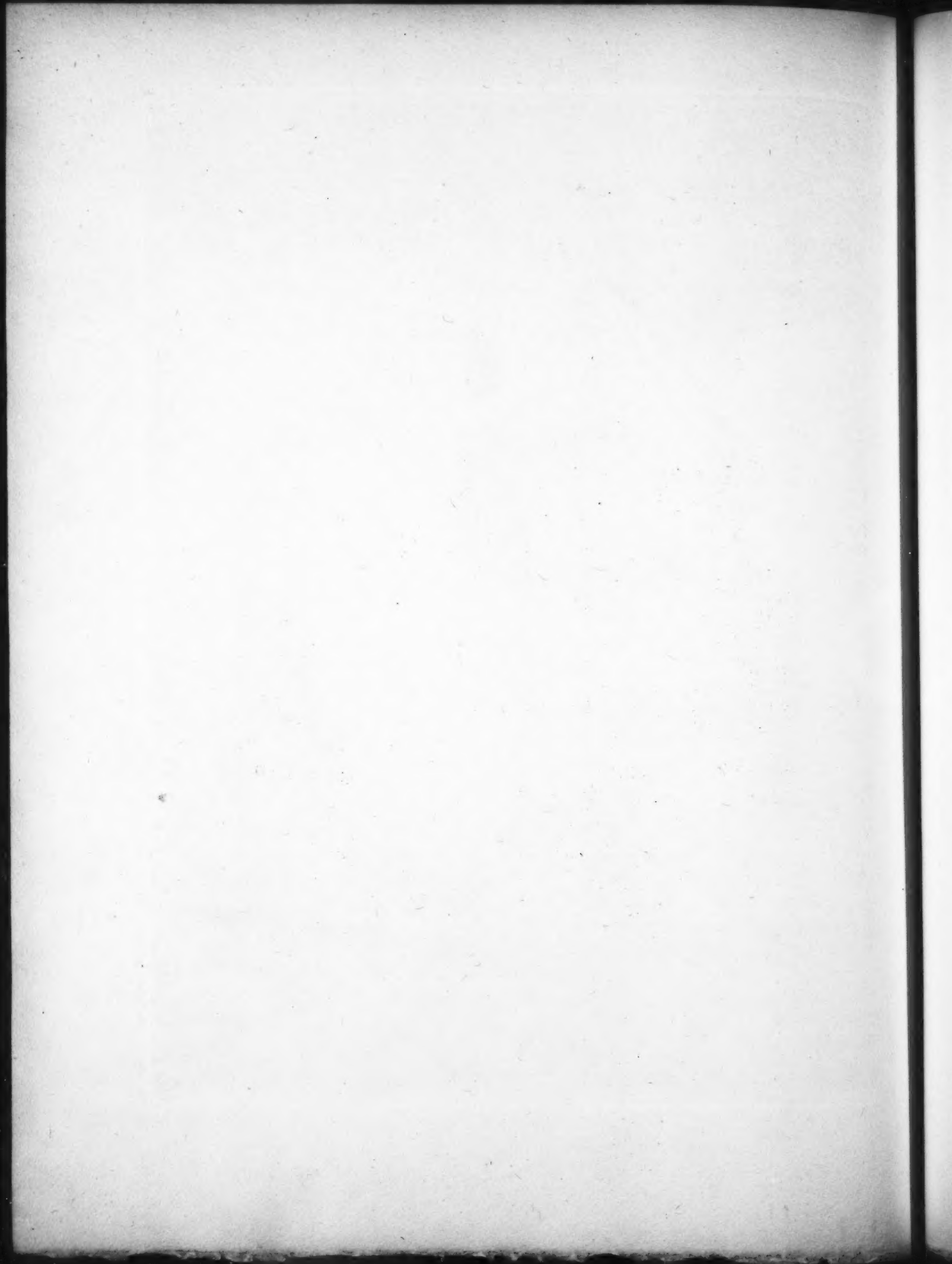
"Look out!" I shouted in bewilderment, feeling for a moment as if I were the hunted quarry, hard beset by a howling pack! But in a moment the riot had melted away, and I heard the sound of horns dying in the distance.

"Where the devil have they got to!" I said, in my simplicity setting off to run after the cavalcade, with no better aid than that of my sexagenarian legs. I need hardly say, that in spite of the guidance of a few scraps of paper, clinging to the trees here and there, I failed to catch up the hunt. I gathered, however, from these tokens, that the scent lay towards Apremont, and I turned to my favourite haunt with a certain anguish of heart. My sweet solitude had been invaded! How would it look after this rude assault?

Alas! my fears were too well realized. It would be many a long day before Nature could draw her green veil over the profanations of the destroyers. They had pursued their imaginary game at the risk of their necks into the remotest corners, scaling the gorges with reckless devilry. The soft moss carpet hung in long shreds, rent away by the horses' hoofs. Among the great ferns there had been a positive massacre. In vain had the junipers and the hollies stretched out their thorny arms to guard the sylvan labyrinth. The invaders had burst through their ranks, leaving ruin in their wake. The litter of slippery, thick-strewn pine-needles was dashed with flakes of white. The trampled soil shewed traces of many a fall and many a scramble. The warriors had themselves come in for a certain amount of damage, it was plain. So much the better, thought I!

I invoked the curses of the gods on them, for the havoc they had made, but in a few minutes I almost forgave them, in consideration of the charming picture they had prepared for me. What were those strains of dance music that suddenly succeeded the blast of the horns? Following the sounds, I came to the "Carrefour," in full view of the gayest of *fêtes champêtres*. There were bright groups of blue uniforms, of smart toilettes, a sprinkling of red coats standing out in picturesque relief against the green background. The actors in the sparkling scene gathered into little knots, laughing, chattering, and flirting to their heart's content! At one end of the glade that formed the *al-fresco* ball-room stood a row of saddle-horses held by grooms, all hot and steaming, and covered with sweat and foam. Between the trees I caught a glimpse of a file of carriages that had joined the hunt. In one corner were hastily arranged tables, set out with champagne, cold meats, and cakes, for appetite had been whetted by the unusual exercise. An amateur photographer, begging for a sitting of a few minutes, was not very kindly treated by the groups round the buffet. His "subjects" burst out laughing at the critical moment, clamoured for mercy when he declared they must place themselves again, and, at the first note of a quadrille, a bevy of bright-eyed, pink-cheeked nymphs (for fresh air had painted every face) fled from him to the arms of their partners; partners plentifully besprinkled with dust and pine resin,





but making up for all defects in costume by the splendour of their youthful vigour and high spirits.

After the quadrille, the band played a polka, and then a waltz, and I saw Hugh Carlton, in olive velvet knickerbockers and Scotch cap, whirl by, clasping his tall blonde, whose feet seemed scarcely to touch the ground. He waltzed a little stiffly, but his strong arm was just the right support for that willowy figure, lissom and undulating as a silken scarf. Irma's pale gold tresses were loosened; her head drooped. Mademoiselle Mouche, on the other hand, was making conquests by very different methods. The fine ankles, visible under her short skirt were like springs of steel, and she seemed determined to stupefy her partner by ceaseless motion, just as the *Willis* stupefy their victims until death ensues. However, every one was envying Wymer, dead or alive; the officers were loud in their admiration, and when I quitted my post of observation the two young ladies were the queens of the fête, the military element eagerly contending for their smiles, while, on the other hand, the *demi-mondaines* of Fontainebleau had taken possession of Carlton and Wymer, who seemed rather overwhelmed by their civilities, and, to tell the truth, more attentive to the champagne than to the sirens that hovered round them.

I hurried away at last, pursued by the echoes of "Orphée" quadrilles, and Strauss or Métra waltzes, heedless of the pathway, and only anxious to regain the solemn calm of my favourite haunt, so much more in harmony with the slow gathering twilight than the gay choruses of the merry-makers. At last! The strains of "Il Bacio" die away by degrees, and I hear nothing but the slow dropping of autumn leaves in the evening quietude.

But was not that a human sound that mingled with the silence? Surely. Yet it melted into the stillness without seeming to break it, like the chirp of a cricket, or the moan of the ringdove. Some one was weeping near me, close to me, hidden by the rock. How was it I had not noticed that little brown skirt before? Perhaps because it was so much of a colour with the mass of sandstone against which the figure it contained was crouching, anxious, it seemed, to escape my eye.

"Faëlla!" I cried. "What are you doing here, my child?"

She raised her head and murmured in a faint voice that she had fallen asleep.

"Asleep!" I repeated, looking, at her tear-stained face, "you have been crying."

"Well, yes, I have," she answered defiantly, "and you had better go and tell him so again. It seems to be your business to spy, to carry tales, to betray people!"

She uttered the word *betray* with scornful emphasis, but in the presence of such anguish who could have been angry? So I answered gently :

"You mean that I told M. Carlton you would like to go to school? But, my dear, I only wanted to help you——"

She fixed her red and swollen eyes upon me, as if thinking :—"Well, perhaps, after all, he is only stupid"—and sobbed out :

"Besides, I don't care now if he does send me away. I will go away of my own accord rather than stay and see what is going on."

"What *is* going on, Faëlla?"

"*You* pretending not to know!"

Her face, scratched by thorns, or perhaps by her own nails, lashed by the boughs through which she had plunged like a wounded beast, and stained with bitter tears, horrified me by its expression of revolting sagacity. The gossips of the inn were right then, after all. Faëlla was in love, and jealous.

"He never came home last night," she said.

"Well, what if he didn't? What is it to you?" I answered curtly.

"And to-day didn't you see them going off together? I ran beside them all along the road as far as I could, behind the trees. He didn't know I was there, but I saw everything—everything." She wrung her hands with a kind of frenzy. "I think he does it on purpose to make me suffer. He hates me—oh! he hates me."

"What has put that idea into your head?"

"I am less than Bob to him, less than his dog. You know, every one

here calls me *thou*; you do yourself, even the people who know me least. Well—he always says *you*.”

“But, Faëlla, that is because in his country no one ever says *thou*.”

“What a country!” she cried, flinging her arms towards Heaven. I daresay she pictured to herself a sort of Hyrcania, where flinty-hearted men were nourished by tigresses.

“But then, why was he making eyes at her, and saying things to her? No, I could never have believed it! He must be mad. Do *you* think her pretty, with her yellow hair and her face all smeared with flour and black stuff? Why, she’s all painted just like a picture! Her maid told me so the other day! Those women who come here to hinder us from working are all made up like dolls. In their bed-rooms they leave about little pots of pomade and pencils, and hares’ feet all over red—

“How is it that a man who is a painter can’t see all that? Why, I could see it through her veil! And do you suppose all that yellow tow grows on her head? Not a bit of it! And if I had been she, I would have chosen some other colour,” said Faëlla with all a rival’s fury of disparagement. “And her stays are full of wadding! She is nothing but a skeleton, and a skeleton who pinches herself in too! Only, of course, she has grand dresses and she knows how to make eyes, and—how long do you think she will stay here?”

She talked feverishly, tearing up all the tufts of grass around, as if she would fain have torn out the heart of the painted and padded enemy.

“Don’t think about such creatures,” I said, taking her by the arm to make her rise, “an honest girl should have nothing at all to do with them. Come, you must go home.”

But she had thrown herself face downward on the grass again, sobbing. I wondered whether she had run along with the carriage behind the rocks and bushes, till her strength failed, and overcome by fatigue, she had really slept, like a child, in the midst of her tears, or whether, like myself, she had fallen in with the paper-chase, and so had been led on to witness the rustic ball, and find fresh food for her frantic jealousy. I tried to find out by questioning her, but could get no answer, save: “Oh! I will have my

revenge! I will have my revenge! He will be sorry for this!" So she reiterated, lying on the ground with her back turned to me, and her face pressed against the rock.

And thus, after many vain entreaties, I was forced to leave her at last, possessed by her despair as by a madness.

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When I went two days later to Madame Fouchard's to enquire for Faëlla, the good woman seemed surprised at my solicitude, and answered: "Don't you see her up there, plucking a fowl?"

There in fact she was, seated on the threshold of the studio, in a tragic attitude strangely out of harmony with her prosaic occupation. She was pale, with the greenish pallor of malaria, her heavy lustreless eyes marked with dark shadows. No one dreamt of noticing her suffering looks. The forlorn creature must have been conscious of the scanty sympathy surrounding her, or she would not have so readily forgotten her old grudge against me, and accepted me as her confidant.

She held up her finger with one of those Italian gestures that came naturally to her, and I understood that she was inviting me to come and hear what she had to say.

When I had approached and stood on the bottom step of the little staircase:

"Here," she said, in a choking voice, "come up, come in here."

And regardless of the exclamations of Madame Fouchard, who shouted that the wind would blow away the feathers, and that the cat would steal the fowl, she preceded me into the empty *atelier*, and led me to an easel, upon which I saw the "Reading Girl," for which Faëlla had been so proud of having sat. A strange fairness had fallen upon the figure under its canopy of spring foliage, and the face had been scraped out, and replaced by a speaking likeness of the languishing Irma Michon!

"He has given her *my* book!" said the child between her clenched teeth.

She was no longer violent; she seemed powerless to express her

indignation, but her haggard eyes said that this was the crowning outrage—that after this, he could do no more.

“Come, come, Faëlla,” I began.

But I, too, was at a loss for words, and knew not how to speak my sympathy.

“Oh! but this is not all,” she continued mournfully. Hunting among the papers, she showed me a sheet upon which was sketched a long slender figure, the same, but clad in a flowing robe, and leaning over a sort of balcony, the “gold bar” of Heaven, as I gathered, from the four lines of Rossetti that were scribbled below.

“What does that mean? that writing?” she asked.

“It is English.”

“But you know English, you can understand it.”

I read, translating for Faëlla’s benefit :

“Her eyes were deeper than the depths
Of waters stilled at even—
Her hair which lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.”

“‘The depths? Waters stilled—’ What does that mean?” asked Faëlla, no wiser than before, apparently.

But it seemed she *had* understood something, for presently she burst out : “Eyes like the eyes of a boiled fish. Hair only fit to twirl on a distaff!—” I will not follow her in her enumeration of Mademoiselle Irma’s charms! She painted them in the vivid vernacular she had picked up for herself in the streets of Paris, or at second-hand from the streets of Rome. I listened aghast to the torrent of invective that poured from her fiercely curling lips, between teeth that looked as if they longed to bite. Like some wild beast that wakes from sleep to roar and destroy, she suddenly threw off the sort of torpor I had taken for resignation, and stood raging with fury before the intruder who had stolen her place, her costume, her book, her corner of the forest, and more; she shook her fist at the picture, hurling curses and insults at the unconscious figure, superb in her passion of rage and hatred like some youthful Medea. Meanwhile, Madame Fouchard was shrieking in the court-yard, beside herself, that the cat had stolen the fowl

as she had foretold, and that Faëlla was to come down and be beaten! And presently Bob's bark mingled with the hurly-burly, announced the approach of his master. I managed to slip away just in time, and for some days I refrained from going to Madame Fouchard's, for I feared that Hugh Carlton would begin to think I was meddling a great deal too much in his affairs.

I did not see him again till the end of the week, for, to use our landlady's expression, the "bridal pair" had their meals in a private room. He seated himself in his old place at my side, with a somewhat sheepish and morose expression. "Well," I said, purposely choosing his mother tongue, in which he was generally more communicative, "well, and what of the lovely lady?"

"The lovely lady went back to Paris this morning," he replied in a low voice, and without a smile. "And it was high time! She is really too great a fool to put up with for long!"

"Yes, I almost think I should have preferred Mademoiselle Mouche of the two," I replied.

He shrugged his shoulders with a contemptuous gesture, implying that there was very little to choose between them, and I understood that I had beside me a man who, for the time at any rate, was weary of this world's vanities.

"I daresay," I went on, "that you set to work this morning with greater zest than ever."

"I've not been able to work at all," he said, his face darkening. "But I've had a busy morning all the same. I've been sending Faëlla about her business!"

"Good heavens! what has the poor child been doing?"

"The poor child is a little obstinate brute. She's been impudent beyond belief, crying and making a scene, and refusing to sit."

Carlton's English accent had become very marked, as always happened when he was repressing some inward emotion. I saw that the moment was not favourable for any defence of my little friend, and I began to talk of other things, but when the meal was over I invited Carlton to join me in my stroll.

"I should like it of all things," he said, "since I am doomed to get

no work done to-day. I only wanted two or three more sittings from that little devil to finish my picture. Ah! now it's raining." And he pointed to the large drops on the window panes. "That's pleasant! I shall be reduced to lounging about here till the evening."

"Oh! it's nothing but a little shower! We won't mind that! Come along."

But the shower became so heavy, that we were obliged to take shelter in his studio.

"Has your little model gone already?" I asked with an affectation of indifference, as he rolled up a cigarette.

"No, I would not allow that. She would have played me some trick if I had let her go off alone. You have no idea of the scene she treated me to! Threatening to kill herself, to throw herself under the train——"

"But why?"

"You may well ask! I don't believe she knows herself," said Hugh Carlton, turning his head aside and closing his eyes as if to avoid the smoke of his cigarette. I saw that he coloured slightly, as if ashamed of his falsehood, for he had a great regard for truth in the smallest details.

"I have already told her parents to come and see her here. Then they can take her away, and I shall be quit of her for good," he added, with a sigh of relief. I heard two timid knocks at the door; Faëlla came in with downcast eyes, carrying a little bodice of rusty velvet over her arm.

"What do you want?" said her master, roughly.

"I've packed up my things," she said, in an unsteady voice, darting a glance at me that touched me deeply, so full was it of sorrowful entreaty, "but this belongs to you." She slowly folded up the poor little rag, and laid it on a chair.

"All right. I know quite well you wouldn't take anything that doesn't belong to you. Is that all you want?" said Carlton impatiently.

"My parents are coming to-morrow," she replied.

He turned his back on her, and pretended to resume his conversation with me, but I was watching little Faëlla. She went noiselessly to the door which she had closed when she first came in, and then stopped suddenly, evidently irresolute, with drooping head and heaving breast. The next

moment she had bounded with a loud cry to Carlton and was on her knees at his feet.

"Oh, I beseech you, keep me—— keep me—— I will not—— I *cannot* go—— I will never do it again—— I will be obedient—— I will never fly into a passion any more—— only keep me——"

There was a strange and touching contrast between her childish expressions of penitence, and the passion with which she gazed at him through her tears, seizing his hands and kissing them wildly with face aflame. Carlton, utterly taken by surprise, stood for a moment dumb-founded, his English notions of reserve and propriety unspeakably outraged.

"You are mad," he said, disengaging himself, "what do you mean by behaving in such a way? Get up. Compose yourself!" This last magniloquent adjuration addressed to Faëlla, made me smile in spite of myself. "Don't make such a spectacle of yourself. I think your insolence this morning was preferable to this."

But Faëlla was strung up to tragedy pitch, giving rein at last to her natural impulses, weeping, screaming, approaching him as she had never dared to do before, covering his hands and his clothes with kisses, in short, throwing off every vestige of the long restraint, more bitter to her than blows and ill-treatment. Carlton understood nothing of it all.

"Are you afraid your parents will be angry with you?" he asked, "well, I promise you not to tell them the real reason why I am sending you away. I will only say that I shan't need you any longer. There, will that please you?"

She shrugged her shoulders with supreme indifference.

"What do I care about that? Let them kill me, since I must leave you."

"You are ill and excited, Faëlla," said Carlton, all the more coldly that perhaps he was somewhat moved. "Remember that I would never put up with this sort of thing a second time. Come, get up." And when at last she obeyed, and stood at a respectful distance, quiet and humble, her hands clasped in a last mute prayer, he appealed to me :

"What would you do in my place?"

"I would keep her," I replied, securing Faëlla's boundless gratitude by these brief words.





"You would be wrong," he said, "and I should be wrong too—
However—as I am only going to stay a fortnight longer—"

"You will keep me till then?" exclaimed Faëlla, bounding again towards him.

"On condition that you behave yourself properly this moment, and that you go away and leave us in peace," said Carlton, evidently vexed with himself.

Thus repulsed by him, she turned to me. Sending me a hasty kiss with both hands, she ran off, the little light-hearted Faëlla once more, but, as I very well saw, with a certain feminine feeling of triumph; a feeling that she had gained instead of losing ground that day.

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How indeed could one look for the innocence of childhood in a girl who had led Faëlla's life, and had been trained by such parents? Oh! those parents! I see them still in the little parlour behind the inn kitchen, wrapping up the remains of the leg of mutton Carlton had ordered for them in an old newspaper. The mother had asked leave to take the bone back to the little ones. Tonino would be pleased! And Sandro too! Poor children, they had not often such a feast! She was sorry she had not brought them with her into the country—such beautiful country! But she had not dared. The Signor had been generous enough in allowing her and her husband to come. It *was* a treat for them and for Raffaëlla too, of course—for she was a good girl, was Faëlla, and did not forget her father and mother—

The "good girl" in question, seated on the edge of the table, swinging her legs, seemed to be waiting impatiently for the end of all these fine phrases. *She* knew perfectly well why her mother had come; she had come to take Faëlla's money and her clothes—everything, down to the pair of stockings Madame Grelu had presented to her in a fit of sudden generosity.

There was really nothing venerable about Faëlla's mother, with her faded smile, her unhealthy complexion, her shifty glance and the hard

expression of her face, enhanced by the thick bandeaux of crisp black hair that almost hid a narrow statuesque brow. She had covered up her Italian costume with a very dirty plaid shawl, which straining across her ample chest shewed the fastenings of her chemisette, and the thick gold balls round her throat, matching those that hung at her ears and glistened in her hair.

The husband of this robust and sturdy dame stood by, his white teeth and great velvety eyes beaming with cunning smiles, younger by many years than the wife he robbed and ill-treated on the strength of his handsome face. He was evidently much puzzled by the severe and yet paternal tone in which Carlton addressed the child, or spoke of her. The Englishman must be a sly fellow—— for Faëlla was growing very handsome, and in the solitude of their daily intercourse he could not have failed to notice it. When Carlton explained that during the winter months he should not want her, and that he proposed her profiting by her leisure and going to school, the worthy pair exchanged glances. Neither of them could read, and they did not find they were any the worse off. Why should not their daughter do as they had done?

“But I will pay,” said Carlton, impatiently.

Santa Madonna! But how were they to live all the time? She would be earning nothing, and she was just of an age now when children could make up to their parents for all they had cost them.

And as to her going to school! a great girl like Faëlla! Why, every one would be making game of her!

“When *I* was thirteen,” added the mother, with a laugh full of evil meaning, “I had already found a husband—— Not this one, of course—— my first—— hadn’t I, Pippo mio?”

And Pippo mio, thus appealed to, answered calmly, as he stooped to pick up a cigar end from the floor, and put it away in his waistcoat pocket: “Your boy—the one that died—was already on the road. She had other children before mine, Signor.”

I concluded that Faëlla was probably one of these children, and that this Adonis of the slums was only the adopted father of the unhappy little creature.

"Disgusting beasts!" I heard Carlton mutter between his teeth.

The unmistakable point of the dialogue, the insistence with which they dwelt upon Faëlla's thirteen years as the age of a woman, had not escaped him either.

"Very well," he said aloud, "keep her if you like. It is useless to try and make you see——"

"No, no, Signor," insinuated Pippo, in an oily tone. "If it were made up to us in some little way——"

And Carlton promised to pay for the sittings Faëlla would be missing by learning to read.

"You may be sure," I said to him, "that they will put the school money into their own pockets, and make her work just as usual. It will be a triple profit for them."

"How can I help it?" said Carlton. "Do what you will, these low brutes will always manage to get the better of you. Of course the girl will be sold by her honest parents, even if she doesn't fall of her own free will."

And here, we drifted into a long discussion upon the fatality that seems to dog some lives, the lives of those condemned to evil by heredity, education, and surroundings, and powerless by nature to struggle against fate? I could see no solution to the problem. By what right does a privileged minority raise itself upon all this human wretchedness? By what right does it claim to be a precious plant, and to have its roots in this human dunghill? With what plausibility does it arrogate to itself all knowledge, virtue, and consideration?

"It only proves," said Carlton, with his accustomed phlegm, "that God himself, in allowing such a state of things, has declared for aristocracies." And I divined that civility alone prevented him from extolling to a mere Frenchman, the most perfect outcome of such a system, the "English gentleman."

"I should like to know, nevertheless," thought I, "how you are to get out of your present dilemma, gentleman though you be, fortified by your iron principles, and your haughty sense of duty? How, in fact, are you to know what is your duty in this matter? Does it lie in sending

this child from you, in giving her over to the evil influences of her surroundings, or in keeping her beside you till the time when, in spite of yourself, you must justify the slanders and innuendoes of gossips, who would only think you a fool to leave a beautiful mistress for others? Either way the devil will have his will. She can't escape him, poor little Faëlla."

This thought haunted me during the whole of a long expedition I made before the November fogs set in, from Barbizon to Bois-le-Roi, from Chartrettes to the Plâtreries, thence by Fontainebleau to Marlotte and Grey, and lastly to Nemours, following the course of the Loing. I went to see Monaldeschi's tomb in the old church at Avon, and visited the deserted park of Courances, near Nilly; I read the monogram of Armand Duplessis, Cardinal de Richelieu, on the façade of the Château de Fleury; after which I returned to Gaune's, not expecting to see anything more of my English painter, with whom I had exchanged a farewell handshake and promise of meeting again in Paris.

"Poor little Faëlla!" I repeated more than once, my heart aching at the hard fate of this budding rose, doomed to fall in the mud before it had unfolded.

I thought not of help that might arise outside the narrow limits of our desires and predictions; I was reckoning without the hurricane that shakes the roses and scatters them before they can be gathered; without the unknown providence that was to suddenly stretch out a rescuing arm, and save this forlorn waif from herself, and from others.

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When I returned to the region of rocks and pines, it had put on a misty veil that enhanced its wildness.

On the Bas-Bréau road the spoils of the great beeches were drifting in heavy clouds before the north wind. It whirled away the distracted brown leaves just as another icy breath, more piercing still, and not less inexorable, drives to the Unknown so many lives at this dread season of the year. The crimson was still on the oaks; but it had paled,

bitten and shrivelled by the rime; the pines were blackened by the frost, that turned the blades of withered grass into diamond aigrettes, and made of every spider's web, fine lace embroidered with pearls.

All the little moss-grown basins of the rocks had become so many inky pools, set round with rotting lichens.

The hard earth cracked under my footsteps, and the cawing of the rooks was like the very voice of winter.

At the inn I found one new-comer of distinction, a certain famed interpreter of the pearly greys of nature who had made a speciality of winter scenes. Of the rest, all had flown, save a few poor devils like the patriarch, condemned by economic considerations to the eternal stewed rabbit and potatoes, and that inevitable scourge, the Grelu baby, whom the little engraver had left as hostage with his mother, by a stroke of genius; thus not only ridding himself of his odious family, but putting off to some indefinite season the Rabelaisian quarter of an hour.

Boulotte had gone, and Grelu and the "Mushroom," while the circle of dogs was much reduced, though several were staying on as boarders in their masters' absence.

As I had arranged to leave in the evening by the coach to Melun, I sauntered down the long village street after *déjeuner*, and thus fell into the toils of Mère Fouchard, always lying in wait on her door-step on the chance of a gossip with some one.

"You here!" she said, "I thought you were in Paris. But, perhaps, you came back with M. Carlton?"

"M. Carlton?— What?— Is he still here?"

"Well, he is and he isn't. That is to say he left the place some three or four days after you, and this morning he came back again. It seems the doctor telegraphed for him, Doctor Clapier, of Chailly, you know, the new one, who ruined my daughter, the wife of the Sablons keeper, by ordering such a quantity of pills and *antique scorbutic* syrup for her little ones last year. Not that he isn't clever enough too. My son-in-law was quite cured of his lameness by a bottle of stuff he gave him to rub on. Oh, he's no fool. But he likes to be paid for his trouble. M. Carlton will soon find out that!"

"But what has M. Carlton to do with Doctor Clapier?"

"Oh, well! since Faëlla's illness——"

"Is Faëlla ill?"

"Didn't you know?" cried Madame Fouchard, delighted at having a piece of news to tell, and a chance of giving a detailed account of the whole affair. "Why, it's the talk of the place! Fancy bringing the small pox to Barbizon where there's never been any epidemic as long as one can remember, and where every one lives to be a hundred,—ruining the reputation of the place for *celerity*—and there's not such another healthy village in all France. And my house—how am I to ever let my house again, I don't know! It's enough to ruin a poor woman! The hussy! To think of her poisoning the whole neighbourhood! She must have caught it at Chailly when she went off to mass there. Such a farce as that was too! A heathen like Faëlla! The dogs will all take to going next! I was obliged to keep her when M. Carlton left—she was in such a fever—it would have killed her to turn her out of bed. The drinks I've had to make for her! Luckily, M. Carlton always pays well, you know. He is a just man—and kind too—a great deal too kind.

"Do you know, he sent for the little monkey's mother to nurse her? Nurse her, indeed, the vile creature knows better than that! She has found a few painters here who have given her work, and so she picks up a little money. That's better fun than watching by her daughter! So all the work falls on my little maid who is worn out with holding Faëlla in her delirium. Her mind runs on the most out-of-the-way things! The nonsense she talked, and the way she screamed and raved about La Raton! always La Raton! You know who I mean? That old woman you meet everywhere about here, carrying faggots and so frightfully pitted with small pox. She is a dreadful old thief, always stealing wood—you should ask my son-in-law about her!—but, poor soul, her face is riddled all over like a colander! No? you have never seen her? Oh, she's too hideous! Her features all swollen, her eyes full of blood, no more eyelashes than on the back of my hand, her flesh nothing but scars and furrows; you never saw such a monster; and I can remember her almost pretty before that sickness. Well, my

little maid—young things will joke, you know—said to Faëlla when the eruption came out all over her : ‘You are just like La Raton now.’ She meant no harm by it, but you have no idea of the way Faëlla screamed. ‘I would rather die,’ she shrieked, ‘kill me, kill me at once!’

“That’s like all her sort, you see; they care for nothing but their looks, because they make a living out of them. The fever still lasts with its ups and downs, yet the doctor says, ‘she is going on all right, it must have its course.’ After all, what do your learned folks know? They talk like a lot of crows knocking down nuts. Only yesterday he said to me : ‘I can’t make out what has happened; she must have had a chill.’ To which I answered very plainly : ‘If she has, it’s your fault. You say the air must be warm and that it must be kept always the same, and that it must be renewed. Which do you mean, I should like to know, for you can’t mean *both*.’ He laughed, for he’s a nice young fellow, not at all proud, and thereupon he sent word to M. Carlton, and M. Carlton came down post haste. I told him *my* opinion; that the child is dying of weakness, because she is not allowed anything to eat; nothing at all is really rather short commons. But it seems there’s something wrong with her lungs too! Ah! there he is! He will be able to explain to you.”

She tried to call out, “M. Carlton!” but her dry lips failed her at last. She was seized with a violent fit of coughing, and was obliged to finish her speech in dumb show.

Carlton had the unapproachable expression he always took on when he was vexed or preoccupied, but at the sight of me his face cleared a little.

“It’s you!” he exclaimed. “I’m glad you’re here, for you are one of the few people who take an interest in the child. I’ve just been seeing the doctor off, and he tells me there’s no hope for her.”

“No hope! That strong, sturdy child! She seemed life and health itself.”

“It was the most malignant kind of small pox; still, the fever was beginning to decrease when a new complication set in, no one can make out why, on the lungs. It seems she is quite conscious, and perhaps I

ought to see her, though it will be very painful. What do you think?"

"Yes, yes, I think you ought certainly to see her, poor little soul. Unless you are afraid of infection," I added.

"As to that, I have braved yellow fever and cholera in my travels," he answered, with one of his haughty looks. And the idea that I could suspect him of cowardice made him spring up the ladder that led to poor Faëlla's lair over the barn, four steps at a time.

I followed him, but not into the garret, the door of which he had left open. I contented myself with leaning forward to look into the miserable room, a regular loft under the roof, supported by thick beams, fringed with cobwebs; the furniture consisted of two folding beds, a rush chair, and a wooden stool, that did duty for a table. On one of the low beds the sick girl lay motionless, her thick black hair streaming in tangled masses on the pillow.

She was alone, her mother had gone to sit.

"Faëlla," said Carlton.

Suddenly Faëlla uttered a little stifled cry, a cry of surprise, and joy, and love.

"You have come back?— You have come back because of me?"

The feeble, broken, exhausted voice had, alas! nothing in common now with the strident, nasal, clarion notes I had once heard rousing the echoes of the forest with the street-refrains of Rome.

"Yes, I came back to see how you are getting on, and I am glad to hear much better news of you, much better news," said Carlton, deliberately swerving, it seemed to me, from his usual regard for truth.

"Does the doctor think I shall get better?"

"Yes, very soon, if you are good and do as you are bid."

I had never heard that softened ring in Carlton's voice before, and I suddenly remembered that once, when he had been talking of his younger days, he told me incidentally he had lost a little sister. He had, perhaps, often framed some such pitiful falsehood for that other dying child, and involuntarily the scene had carried his thoughts back to her.

"But," said Faëlla, with a sob, "if I do get better I shall be ugly, I shall be like La Raton, I shall never be able to sit again."

"What does that matter? You can do something else? You shall learn some trade. That will be really much better."

"I shall be good for nothing," repeated Faëlla, persistently, "I shall never see you; you would never bear to have me near you."

Was it an irresistible feeling of compassion, conjured up by some keen memory of the little lost sister, whose dying voice, perhaps, had breathed in just such plaintive cadence, or was it the certainty that his promise would not bind him long? He answered hastily :

"No, no, Faëlla, you may make your mind easy, ill or well, ugly or pretty, you shall not leave me."

"Will you promise?"

"Yes, I promise."

"Oh," she murmured, "how sorry I am that I opened the window!" Carlton seemed not to notice the heart-broken whisper, but I remembered it afterwards.

"Now you are not to worry yourself any more, and you must make haste and come back to me." He held out his hand to her. "*Au revoir*, little Faëlla."

She tried to raise herself, to clasp the hand now offered to her for the first time, then suddenly she recoiled to the opposite edge of the bed, drawing the coverlet over her head, and with a gesture of terror, she moaned :

"Oh! no! Don't touch me. You might catch it!— M. Carlton," she added, imploringly, "if you would for once, just for once, *si vous vouliez me tutoyer?*—"

"*Que Dieu te bénisse!*" said the Englishman gravely.

Later, after Faëlla's death, I found out the truth by dint of questioning the little maid. The doctor had repeatedly said, in the patient's hearing, that the great danger lay in taking cold, and had enjoined all possible precautions.

"If you got a chill, it would kill you," he had told her, thus pointing out to her a way of escape from the fate she dreaded—ugliness, disfigurement, the loathsome leprosy of La Raton. Despairing and still half delirious, she had thrown open the window and exposed herself, nearly naked, to the

icy air of a November morning. Madame Fouchard's servant, who had found her thus, had said nothing, for fear of a scolding, as she had been ordered to watch the sick girl carefully.

* *

It is years since all this happened. Hugh Carlton has kept the promise of his early works, and now takes honourable rank among the ever-increasing number of foreign painters who exhibit in Paris. The much talked of canvas he sent to last year's Salon was remarkable for a certain depth of feeling and vigorous simplicity of execution. It was a picture of modest dimensions, showing the little church-yard of Chailly wrapped in wintry twilight, its humble crosses standing in picturesque irregularity among the shrubs and grasses. Against the low wall, wrapped in the folds of a large black cape, leant a pensive female figure, whose face, veiled by the evening shadow, was the face of Faëlla. So I see that although, he never mentions her in any of our rare meetings, Carlton has not quite forgotten the little Italian, and that, retaining from afar the privilege of which she was so jealous, she is his model still.

TH. BENTZON.





THE SALON "FORTY"



You remember M. Poirier's axiom in Émile Augier's delightful play : " What I want to see is the encouragement of art, and the discouragement of artists." Some such Prudhommesque creed seems to find favour with the members of the Salon Jury, at least for such time as they sit in judgment on the procession of canvases as it passes before them. There are limits to human heroism, though there are none, apparently, to artistic productiveness, or to what poses as such. I invite all who doubt this to follow me through certain statistics.

We will take the case of a Jury which has been damning pictures for twenty years. The average number per annum passed in review will be about five thousand, which, in twenty years, brings the total to about one hundred thousand. Now put the average length of a picture, a French Salon picture, at five feet. It will then be evident that if we

mentally arrange these hundred thousand works of art side by side on an invisible line, we shall find our Jury to have travelled along five hundred thousand feet, or rather more than the distance between Paris and Orleans.

So much for the length. Now for the height, which, I warn my fellow mathematicians, is a giddy one! If, by a miracle of equilibrium, we could balance the aforesaid hundred thousand canvases one on top of another, we should lift them a long way above the earth's atmosphere; they would, in fact, make a column twenty-two times higher than Mont-Blanc. From that dangerous elevation, the adventurous spirit who should have crowned the structure with the one hundred-thousandth and last canvas could barely make out the Eiffel Tower itself, like a speck on the distant earth. As for the plumpest member of the last French ministry, he would long have vanished from his ken.

Unhappily—or shall I say happily—such an experiment cannot be tried. To begin with, how could we once more bring together the material, the hundred thousand canvases, for our modern Tower of Babel? The brain reels at the notion of tracing out the vicissitudes of those acres of paint during the past twenty years. By what thorny paths of research and enquiry should we not have to pass in the attempt to reconstruct their identities? Where should we find them? In private galleries? In the Luxembourg? in the Louvre? Alack! how many? or rather, how few? And as to the rest? Yea, the rest? The disappearance of some may be explained by fires. At the time of the Commune, for instance—— But I am afraid we cannot depend wholly on such catastrophes. M. Félix Pyat's friends did not specially direct their petroleum against pictures. They said not: "Down with Galimard!" but, "*Flambez, Finances!*"

I am myself of opinion that the melancholy store of unsold pictures is mouldering in attics, in passages leading to servant's bed-rooms, in dealers' back-shops, among amateurs' household lumber. How is it that they are not publicly sold by the gross for the price of their frames? Solely, I expect, because of a latent hope in the hearts of their owners, who bear in mind the fantastic fluctuations of public taste, and recall

some legend of a Millet unearthed from a garret that fetched a hundred, or even a thousand-fold, its original price.

But by far the greater number of these neglected works were no doubt returned to their authors, who set to work scraping out their creations with melancholy zeal, and preparing the battered canvas for a new inspiration, destined, no doubt, in its turn to undergo the same process. Surely honest Poirier was right in his declaration.

But let us leave these weaklings of Art to their thankless toil, and pass on to the elect, to the few chosen, among so many called. We may fitly pass them in review on the pages of *Art and Letters*; no less fitly may we take them in the order assigned by their peers, the electors of the Jury. I ask their indulgence for the rapid sketches I mean to make of them, encouraged by the hope, that after the fashion of other juries of the present day, they will let me down easily, whatever my crimes.

LÉON BONNAT. — Age fifty-five. A head full of character, with deep black eyes, a clean cut profile, and lines suggestive of energy and decision.

A native of Bayonne, indeed almost a Spaniard in his tastes and habits. His first master was Madrazo, the third Madrazo in that illustrious generation of Spanish painters, of which the fourth—but not, we will hope, the last—has become a Parisian by adoption. M. Bonnat may be said to lead a dual life. All day he is hard at work in his studio in the Rue Bassano. In the evening he appears in society, where he is greatly run after. He talks Art with much charm of manner and in a finely modulated voice. A characteristic trait in M. Bonnat; is, that like all true Basques, he is faithful to the soil. He has never given up his father's house at S. Jean-de-Luz, and loves to install himself there, turning his back on the world. Once settled in his sea-side stronghold, he gives himself up entirely to the delights of fishing and boating, and to the luxury of a tweed cap, "espartillas" and unlimited al fresco cigarettes.

HENRI HARPIGNIES. — Age seventy-one. The father of the Jury, and a father who is looked up to by all his children. Many of his best

pupils are now themselves giving the world promising scholars. In *Les Charbonniers*, one of Baron, the actor's, points, was the pride with which he proclaimed himself "secretary to the secretary of the Police Commissioner." It is something to be the pupil of a pupil of Harpignies !

A native of Valenciennes, and the son of a well-to-do manufacturer, he took to painting, like so many others, in the teeth of family opposition. He has no reason to regret his choice. State distinctions (he is an officer of the Legion of Honour), and the suffrages of his fellows, combine to make of him the very type of the successful man, who finds life good.

His tall figure and splendid beard give to this peaceful lover of Nature the appearance of a very Don Diego, though he is, as a fact, the most simple-minded of men. At a banquet at Ledoyen's in honour of his new dignity, the genial old man modestly returned thanks for the various toasts and compliments celebrating the rosette in his button-hole, and added : "At my age, the most appropriate decoration would perhaps be the St. Helena medal, if artists had a right to wear it."

JEAN-JACQUES HENNER. — A pure Alsatian, a true son of the soil, a kindly "Ami Fritz," whose heart is still warm in spite of the snows that whiten his sexagenarian head. But for all his amiability, M. Henner does not like to be interrupted when at work. No one has a more wholesome dread of the bores who force their way into a painter's studio, with the formula : "Don't disturb yourself; I'll just stay long enough to smoke a cigar," and end by a two hours' visitation, their perpetual chatter and movement making as much havoc in the painter's meditation, as a dog in a game of nine-pins. Venture not into the studio of the Place Pigalle, until the daylight begins to fade, and M. Henner, having earned his evening rest, lays aside his palette, and sits at ease, in smiling contemplation of some favourite study, the calm profile of a nun, the head of a saint, or the voluptuous limbs of a woodland nymph, stretched at full length in the gloaming, and clothed in a ray of dying light.

L. BONNAT



PORTRAIT DE S. E. LE CARDINAL LAVIGERIE

SALON DE 1888



WILLIAM-ADOLPHE BOUGUEREAU. — This painter of virgins has not much poetry in his outward man. Nothing in his appearance hints at the artist. His fat, round figure, his short beard and moustache make him look like nothing so much as some worthy judge of the *Tribunal de Commerce*. The impression is not so misleading as it seems. M. Bouguereau has the reputation of a first-rate man of business. Each successive United States Minister in Paris has listened respectfully to his arguments *ex professo* against the outrageous American import duty on foreign pictures. It was to him that a witty Yankee said, in reference to this strange tax : "What can we do? Certain countrymen of ours insist on protecting the national brand of Rembrandts!"

ALEXANDRE CABANEL. — A native of Montpellier. One of the most famous victors in that great battle the upshot of which has been the conquest of France by the South. Yet a victor such as the vanquished themselves might desire. The courtesy, the charm, the amiability and expansiveness of this daintily dressed old gentleman are proverbial.

A Member of the Institute, Professor at the École des Beaux-Arts, the holder of every sort and kind of international gold medal, M. Cabanel has nevertheless no notion of resting on his laurels. It is true that he is the accredited painter of pretty women, and that after having portrayed all the Parisian beauties of any note for thirty years, there must be much piquancy in painting their daughters too.

GUSTAVE BOULANGER. — Late events have made this gentleman willing to change his name for any other. The shouts of "Vive Boulanger!" by which his younger artist friends make merry at his expense, are not exhilarating to a man who has had no Paulus for sponsor.

Boulanger has simply gone his honest, open way, without venturing into the by-paths of self-advertisement.

And yet—there *is*, perhaps, after all, something in a name—Gustave Boulanger has all the qualities that go to make a popular favourite. His quick eye, his impetuously familiar gestures, his unfailing gaiety, suggest a typical example of an artist who has forgotten the mortifica-

tions of early reverses, and has set himself to win the love of all his contemporaries, great and small. Of the latter, we need not speak. Among the former I may quote such names as Dumas, Gérôme, and Charles Garnier, and these might be multiplied to infinity, so numerous are his friends.

JULES LEFEBVRE. — Born at Tournan (Seine-et-Marne), in 1836. His tall figure and formidable moustache, are somewhat at variance with the gentle benevolence of his features. He looks like a cavalry officer who has forgotten his cavalry swagger. I believe, however, that his only connection with the army is through a brother in the War Office. He is married, and the father of a family, and prefers the society of his home to any other. After laying down his brush, he loves to take his pleasure among his own, amidst the dainty surroundings of his pretty house in the Rue de la Bruyère, for M. Lefebvre belongs to a generation that knew not the Parc Monceaux.

He has enjoyed all the plums of the profession, including the *médaille d'honneur*, and strange to say, no one grudges him his dignities, not even his rank as an officer in the Legion of Honour, or the cosy independence he has earned. It was touching the proofs of material prosperity which he carries on his back that a wag in his studio remarked: "Isn't it odd that the master should owe so many coats to his nudities."

ANTOINE VOLLON. — A native of Lyons, like Puvis de Chavannes, but born in a more modest sphere. He rose from the ranks, a self-made man, a man who has gained a first place by sheer force of will—*par la force de la Vollon...té*, as one of his friends has punningly put it.

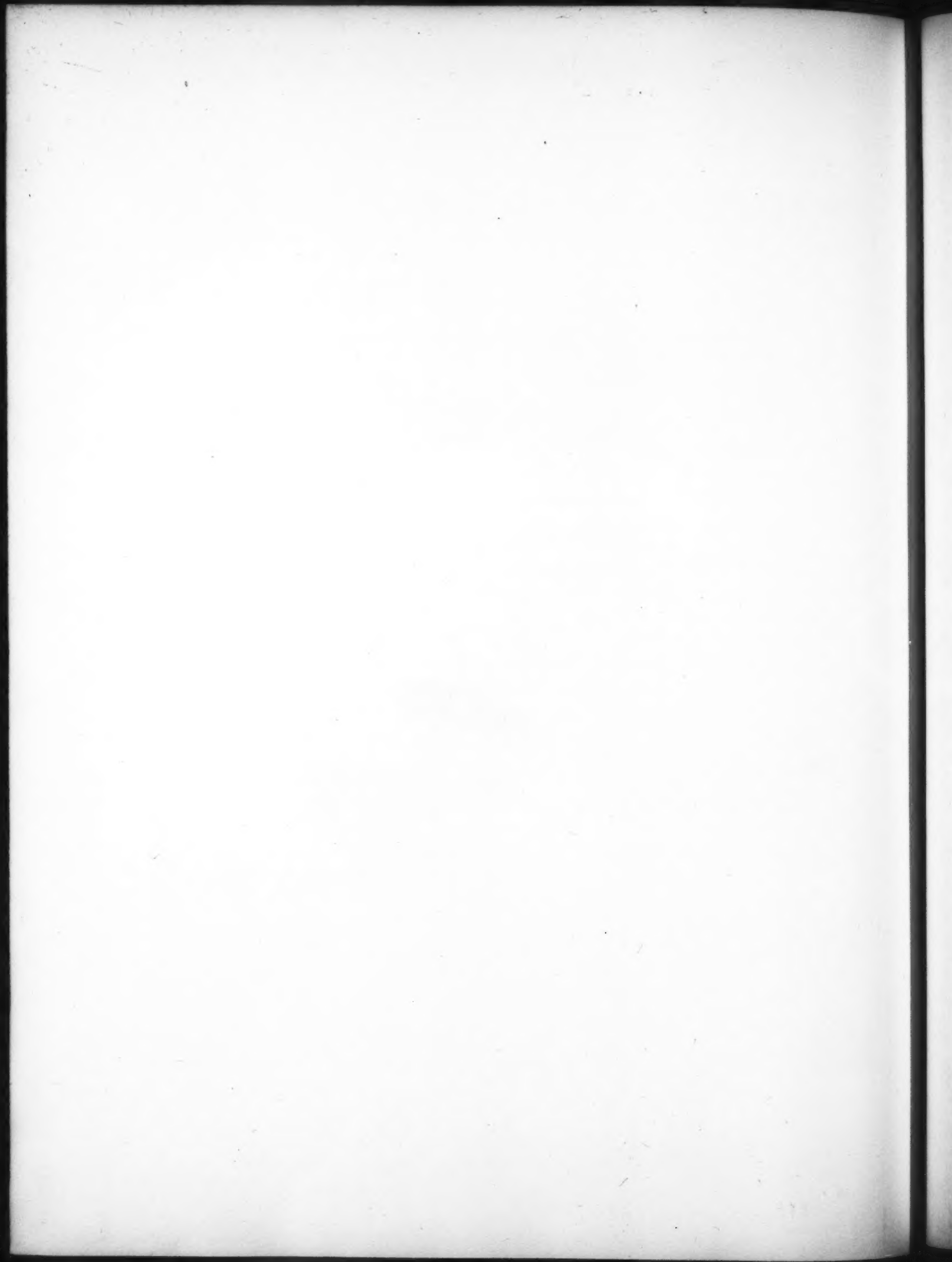
He is one of the monarchs of "still-life." The first time that he exhibited a cluster of southern grapes, he, an unknown probationer, stood with beating heart among the crowd that passed before his picture. "Those grapes make me ill," said a slightly nasal voice beside him. Vollon turned away mortified. "I could not paint them to save my life," continued the speaker. One can imagine how the cloud lifted from Vollon's face, for it was Philippe Rousseau who spoke.

FIRMIN GIRARD



SUR LA TERRASSE

SALON DE 1888



M. Vollon is an officer of the Legion of Honour, and even M. Rochefort does not feel called upon to denounce his decoration as a piece of jobbery. The *Fisher-girl by the sea*, one of Vollon's masterpieces, is a gem of the now well-known collection brought together by the editor of the *Intransigent*.

JULES BRETON. — The most kindly of sexagenarians, short, fat, and tubby, a typical *bourgeois* in appearance, and an undisguised wearer of spectacles. What can be more unlike one's preconceived idea of an artist who is not only painter but poet? M. Breton's verses breathe the most exquisitely pastoral feeling, and lose nothing by the perfection of their workmanship.

Brittany and Artois—M. Breton is a native of the latter—have furnished many a theme to fit the delicate dreaminess of his genius. It was in allusion to this strain in his work that Paul de Saint-Victor uttered his prophetic criticism: "He will write eclogues as other men write prose. His *œuvre* is a page of the Georgics done into Artesian *patois*." In 1872, M. Breton gained the *médaille d'honneur*. He has worn the rosette of the Legion since the exhibition of 1867. The cup of his fame is full. Unlike his forerunner, Millet, to this happier painter of the fields may be applied Théodore de Banville's description of Victor Hugo:

Génie entré vivant dans l'immortalité.

(A genius whose immortality has begun while yet in the flesh.)

FERNAND CORMON. — M. Cormon's father was one of the authors of that justly famous melodrama *Les Crochets du Père Martin* (the Porter's Knot). The elder Cormon was for a time manager of the Vaudeville in the days before the reign of Carvalho.

The son might have made a career for himself at the theatre, for his intellectual gifts are many and varied, in spite of their perhaps paradoxical complexion. But art claimed him in his early youth, and he has had no cause to repent his choice.

He is a small man, highly strung, and of such extraordinary leanness that, as studio legends declare, his leg can go through the hole in his

palette as easily as his thumb. He is a male sylph, a feather, a breath so ethereal that there is nothing solid about him but his talent.

JEAN-JOSEPH-BENJAMIN CONSTANT. — Born in 1845, is the youngest member of the jury numbered among the mighty ten. The distinction is due not only to his rank as a painter, but to the genial charm of his expansive individuality, bubbling over with southern gaiety and animation. It is said that he has a blind faith in his lucky star. And his confidence is not mis-placed. Since he left M. Cabanel's studio, life has stretched before him bright and cloudless as those Egyptian skies he loves to paint.

Although the son-in-law of so famous a politician as M. Emmanuel Arago, he himself never meddles with affairs. The only "Eastern question" he gives his mind to, is the one he annually solves upon canvas.

JEAN-PAUL LAURENS. — Without going so far as to say that M. Laurens looks like a bird of ill-omen, one cannot fail to be struck by the strange analogy between his personal appearance and the class of subjects he affects. His work would not be out of place in an undertaker's gallery, if undertakers had galleries. We will name at random a few of his most popular pictures : *The death of Cato of Utica*, *The Death of Tiberius*, *Jesus and the Angel of Death*, *The Death of the Duc d'Enghien*, *Francesco Borgia causing the coffin of the Empress Isabella to be opened*, *The Death of Marceau*, *The Burial of Sainte Geneviève*, *The last moments of the Emperor Maximilian*; and here many of the most harrowing in the series of his "Dance of Death" are left out.

A man so melancholy and finding his attraction in such depressing themes naturally cares little enough about society. He used never to be seen but in one drawing-room, that of Dubufe, where a time-honoured joke obtained to the effect that he never took any refreshment save beer.

TONY ROBERT-FLEURY. — The son of a father whose memory he cherishes

P. GROLLERON



JANVILLE 1870

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with a most touching veneration, and from a plastic point of view, himself the most perfect of his father's works, M. Tony Robert-Fleury's head is one of the handsomest that the atrocious chimney-pot has ever disfigured. Caricature is powerless there, just as criticism itself is disarmed by his pictures. His *Doctor Pinel at the Salpêtrière*, his *Danaïdes*, his *Charlotte Corday*, raised him to the first rank among his brethren, and he has had wisdom enough not to rest on his laurels.

In the artistic world, M. Robert-Fleury is looked upon as the most attractive of talkers. He can even be eloquent upon occasion, especially when the interests of the fraternity are concerned. Happily for Art, he has so far not abused his oratorical talents by laying himself out for a deputy's *mandat*. He is, perhaps, only biding his time till women have votes, when he is certain of being carried in triumph into the Palais Bourbon.

ÉDOUARD DETAILLE. — M. Detaille is exactly forty. He is further a tall, slight, perfectly well-bred looking man, with a fair, curling moustache. Add to this a certain cavalry dash, and you will get a good idea of his appearance, which is very much that of some promising young officer of hussars. He is, as a fact, only a lieutenant in a *chasseur* regiment of the reserve. But he enjoys the dignity of officer of the Legion of Honour, and his commandership cannot be very far off.

I have been told that he regrets not having followed a military career. Those who know what a small portion of time an officer on active service can devote to Art, will hardly sympathise with his disappointment, a disappointment which I, for one, am at a loss to understand. The hour may yet come, however! May M. Detaille be still young enough to face the enemy with as good a heart as he did in his character of a *Garde Mobile de la Seine* during the siege of Paris. Meanwhile his art opens all military circles to him. In every spot where the French flag floats he is a joyfully welcomed guest. His popularity is not bounded by the French frontier. Reviews are ordered for him at Krasnoë-Selo, to say nothing of Berlin, where, like his lamented friend Alphonse de Neuville, M. Detaille is the object of a jealous and reluctant admiration

on the part of our conquerors. The only pictures in the late Emperor William's bed-room were engravings after Detaille and de Neuville, and under one of them the Emperor had written with his own hand: "Homage from the victor to the vanquished."

PIERRE PUVIS DE CHAVANNES. — Noble by birth, a gentleman by education, and a rich man to boot, M. Puvis de Chavannes is one of those happy people who were born, as the proverb has it, with silver spoons in their mouths. Yet no living artist has been less of a dilettante in spite of his freedom from money anxieties. No visitor finds him at his home in the Place Pigalle after nine o'clock in the morning. By that time he has already started for Neuilly, to begin his day's work in the vast studio, constructed so as to fulfil every condition for the success of the gigantic compositions he has made his speciality. There he paints till nightfall and generally stands at his work. The intuition of genius, rather than any practical experience, must have guided him in his conception of one of his finest works—the picture known as "Rest" (*Le Repos*).

He is tall and florid, with one of those pleasantly expressive faces that attract at first sight. His education and mental culture fit him to shine in the most intellectual circles, but he has renounced the ambitions which would keep him out of bed in the small hours, and unfit him for his next day's work. Had he yielded to such temptations, he must have bidden farewell to his early rising and fruitful morning toil.

CHARLES BUSSON. — M. Busson's honest rustic face finds its counterpart in his art, and is as genially attractive as his works. He lives in the country the greater part of the year, at his native village in Loir-et-Cher, Montoire, the picturesque features of which he has reproduced for us with a broad, frank brush.

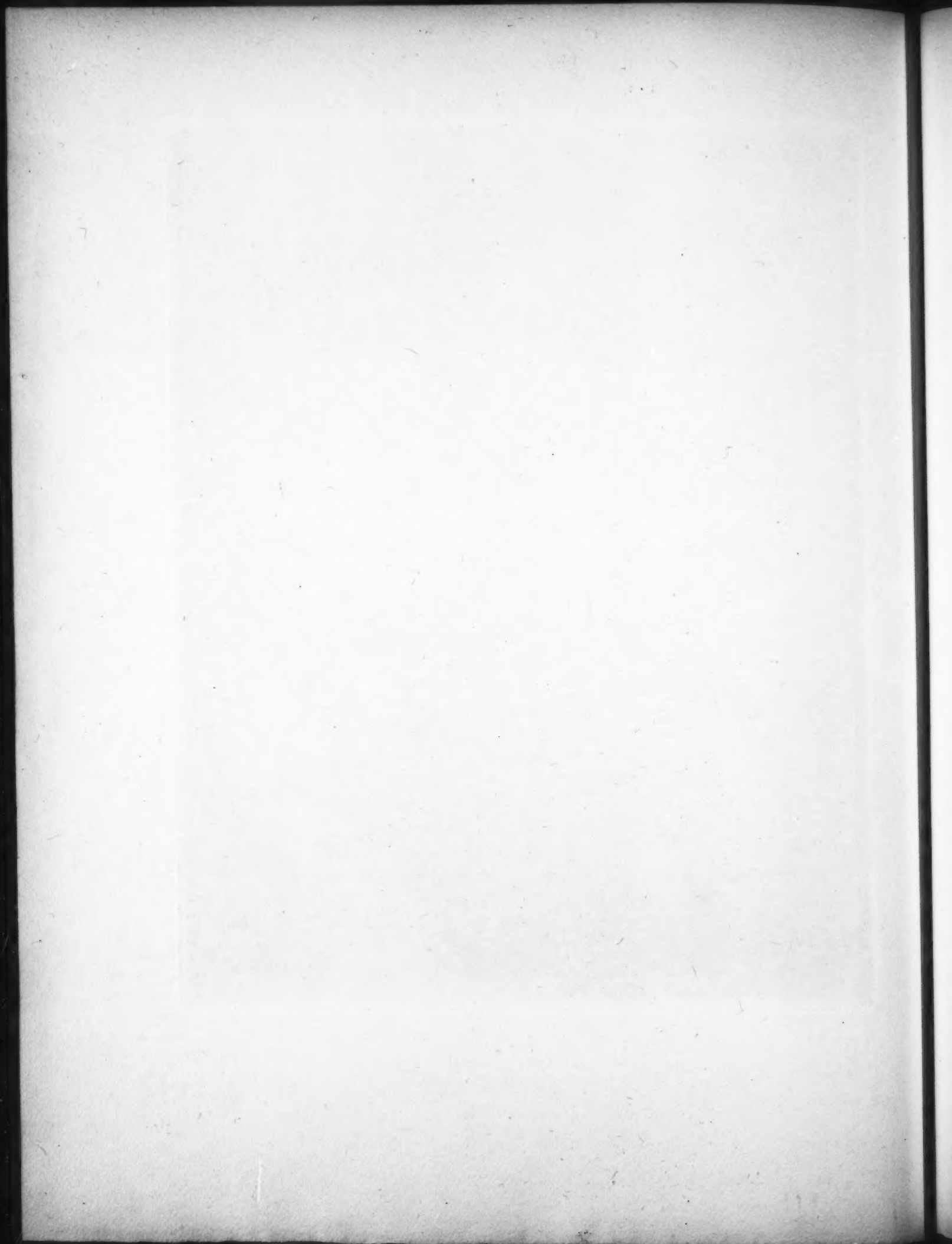
A worshipper of Nature, he is nevertheless no bigot, and keeps up the friendliest relations with Paris, where he is much sought after in certain circles by reason of his good temper and ready wit. He was a constant frequenter of Alfred Arago's famous domino parties, where used also to congregate Ballu and Philippe Rousseau, and Labiche (alas! all

H. W. MESDAG



LA NUIT; — PLACE DE SCHEVENINGUE

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gone!) and where he may still try his luck against Émile Protais, Émile Augier, Albert Cavé, and other famous or lively guests, all more inclined to resent the turning up of an adverse double-six than the smartest joke at their own expense. M. Busson is in his sixty-sixth year, and enjoys the best of health. Several of his pictures are in the Luxembourg, and there is every reason to believe that many years will elapse before they are transferred to the Louvre.

EDMOND YON. — Long before M. Salis of the *Chat Noir* had proclaimed Montmartre the Aventine of civilization, and had demanded its separation from the State, M. Yon had fixed his abode upon that unholy height. And not only did he there domicile himself, but proceeded next to reproduce that Himalaya of the ancient suburb on canvas. His *Montmartre in 1870* is one of his most remarkable creations.

When he comes down from his fastness and descends like a cheerful whirlwind upon Paris, acquaintances and friends gather round him in shoals to clasp his frankly proffered hand. Few men have so many intimates, and it is perhaps for this reason that he feels it hard to tear himself away from Paris, and always lingers on its outskirts. Glancing over a list of his works, we shall find his brush always busy along the Seine. It is apparently as hard to separate M. Yon and Montmartre as Montmartre and the State.

J.-B.-ANTOINE GUILLEMET. — M. Guillemet is yet another that looks like a soldier painter. He is about forty-four; his moustache and imperial, his frankly resolute air, all contribute to the military aroma that clings about him. When he sets up his easel on the beach at Villers, or the cliffs of Dieppe, the little urchins that prowl around, thirsting, after the fashion of their kind, to pelt the unsuspecting artist with sly pebbles, slink off, overawed by his obvious pugnacity.

He is known in Parisian society as a brilliant talker, and has the reputation of being as good a classic as the late Désiré Nisard. But the scrap of Latin lore he bears most constantly in mind is the hemistich: *O! rus, quando ego te aspiciam*. Directly the fine weather begins, he

is off to sunny coasts. A faithful lover of the sea, he has made but one offering to the beauties of fresh water scenery. This was his "Seine near the bridge of Bercy in December," now in the Luxembourg.

AIMÉ MOROT. — A Menalcas among painters, the very personification of absent-mindedness. A memorable joke against him was made by one of his friends, who declared that "he had forgotten his hat at an appointment he forgot to keep." No painter has ever been more devoured by the fever of painting. His love for his work has grown into a sort of amiable possession, making him heedless of the obligations of daily life. His whole imagination is absorbed in the spirited scenes he loves to reproduce. The eyes of his mind are fixed, not on the domestic realities about him, but on some dashing, daring charge of steel-clad cuirassiers, some gallant rush against hopeless odds, some furious give and take between French and Prussian at Gravelotte or Rezonville.

At the first meeting of this year's Jury, when the members were counted, Morot was found to be missing. "I suppose he has forgotten he is on the Jury," said some one, and the explanation was accepted as a matter of course. It happened, however, that for once in his life, the young artist's non-appearance was deliberate. He was getting married, and his bride was the daughter of Gérôme.

DOMINIQUE-FÉLIX DE VUILLEFROY. — A man who knows his own mind. He was brought up by a father who, first as President of a section in the *Conseil d'État*, then as senator under the second Empire, may be said to have explored all the by-ways of administration. M. de Vuillefroy senior hoped not unnaturally that his son would tread in his footsteps on the dusty road of politics. In obedience to his father, young Vuillefroy worked hard enough to pass his examination for an auditorship in the *Conseil d'État*, with some honour, but that was all. One fine morning he broke his bonds, and set to paint horned beasts. One either has, or has not, a vocation!

A thoroughly cultivated man, M. de Vuillefroy speaks agreeably and pretty often at artistic gatherings. After having long led a single exis-

P. E. METZMACHER



LE LION AMOUREUX

SALON DE 1888



tence he married last year, and since then has lived partly in a country château, where plenty of animals are at hand, both to eat and paint. The Ugolino of art, he devours his bullocks that they may not lose an artist who can do them justice!

ALBERT MAIGNAN. — A thinker, with deep eyes glowing behind his *pince-nez*. He began with law. Once a graduate, he proceeded in deference to the paternal wishes, to plead for those who make widows and orphans, until one fine day he burst out with the French equivalent of the "Anch'io sono pittore" of the Italian master. He had quietly enrolled himself as an amateur among the pupils of M. Jules Noel, and the latter, marking his ability, had advised him to embark in earnest on his true vocation. M. Maignan senior resisted at first, but now he must rejoice that his licentiate of a son took some license with the bar, and made it a rest for the maulstick. It is not every one whose heir could carry off a first-class medal in his thirty-fourth year, the age of M. Maignan in 1879. This triumph was celebrated by a banquet at the "Mirlitons" when three birds were killed with one stone. For Carolus-Duran and Saint-Marceaux, also members of the club, had each carried off *médaillles d'honneur*.

This is about the only episode we can find to notice in the quiet life of M. Albert Maignan, a painter of history who himself has none.

CAROLUS-DURAN. — A Velasquez stepped down from its frame : so he has been described. I don't know whether he has ever heard the simile, but I am pretty sure if he has, it did not make him frown, for to his eyes Velasquez is a sun in the sky of Art ; a God with but one rival, the Dutchman Rembrandt. The masters of Madrid and Amsterdam have had no more enthusiastic adorer than Carolus-Duran, whose guitar could tune its own strings to sing their praises.

The painter of the *Dame au Gant* is a Fleming with Spanish blood in his veins. Every one who has been much in the neighbourhood of Valenciennes or Dunkirk, must have noticed the Castilian atavism which persists among the women, the black hair and eyes, the swarthy skin,

the undulating gait. One is amazed to find the spindle in their hands instead of the castanet. Now, the master of whom we speak is of kin, too, to the ancient oppressors of the Netherlands.

But Carlos rather than Carolus though he is, he has become as frankly Parisian as the best of us. When the daylight begins to fade in his huge, well-lighted studio in the Passage Stanislas, he sends away the model from whom he has been at work—some woman, perhaps, whose beauty he has made famous in two hemispheres, Madame de Pourtalès, Madame Feydeau, Madame Vandal, Mademoiselle Croizette, and many others might be named—and as the night falls upon the red walls and artistic confusion of the studio, he snatches down his hat and rushes off to the *salle d'armes* of the "Mirlitons." Then after a few fiery but ever correct attacks, he takes his douche, dresses at the rate of a mail-train, and makes off to dine in the four quarters of Paris, for they all know him, and know him well. It is no use, however, to look for him in the most brilliant *salon* after midnight has struck. He is an early riser; he learnt the habit in his youth, when he lived for six months in the convent of St. Francis, at Subiaco. There he shared the frugal, contemplative life of the monks, and rose to his work every morning at the first stroke of the Angelus.

CAMILLE BERNIER. — M. Bernier is not one of the traditional artists who come to Paris in sabots, and have to sell even those to buy colours. He was master of a fine fortune at an early age, and chose his career for love of it, yet has he been no idle apprentice. His work could not have been more unremitting and conscientious had his daily bread depended on it, and the only relaxations he allows himself are the famous weekly *déjeuners*, when he gathers round him a brilliant band of friends and brother-painters. M. Bernier is the most cordial and animated of hosts, and his cook, as complete an artist as himself, has made these Sunday feasts an event in the gastronomic calendar. Though Alsatian by birth, and a native of Colmar, M. Bernier seeks inspiration chiefly among Breton scenes. He spends much time at Bannalec and interprets with marvellous sympathy, the poetry of the marshy *landes* of Brittany.



Wendell (1902) 24.



FERDINAND HUMBERT. — M. Humbert is just forty, of medium height, somewhat diminished by a slight stoop. His regular features have nothing of statuesque coldness. His brother, one of the most distinguished surgeons in Paris, took the highest honours as a student, and M. Humbert kept pace with him in university achievements. To his fame as a painter he has added a well-earned reputation for culture.

M. Humbert worked first under Picot, and later under Cabanel. He profited greatly, too, by the friendly counsels of Fromentin. But his is a peculiarly original genius, overflowing with poetry and sentiment, and its individualism was strongly marked at the outset. He gained his first medal in 1866, when he was only twenty-three. Of a disposition at once kindly and enthusiastic, M. Humbert's friends are all who know him. Few men can put such an element of fascination into their talk concerning Art. The mere contact with a temperament so generous and so responsive is pleasurable, whether in the quiet of his own studio, or in the hubbub of an afternoon gathering at the "Mirlitons."

ALEXANDRE RAPIN. — M. Rapin has an unlucky name for a painter. It gives an opening for jibes to those who are insufficiently impressed with the dignity of art. To the English reader it may be necessary to explain that *rapin* means an aspirant, whose skill is not yet abreast of his energy, who spoils a canvas with more ease than he makes a picture. Perhaps M. Rapin became a painter expressly to give the lie to the notion suggested by his patronymic. All fencers know that one of their famous masters was first led to try his skill with the foil by nothing in the world but his enjoyment of the eccentric name of Gâtechair! In any case M. Rapin has no reason to repent his courage in braving the omen of his name. He is one of the truest landscape painters of the moment; his pictures from Franche-Comté are the delight of every refined observer. In person, M. Rapin has a peculiar likeness to M. Jean-Paul Laurens, whom we have already called the most melancholy of men. This is another touch of the irony of fate.

PAUL VAYSON. — Of medium height, with a pair of keen blue eyes.

Fortune has smiled through life upon this happy child of the South. He is rich, with an assured position, both in and out of his profession. He was a member of the Jury for the 1878 Exhibition. His impartiality is known of all men. It almost verges on indulgence, for M. Vayson is as gentle as the sheep he paints so well.

HENRI PILLE. — The merriest of mortals, and the best of good fellows, in spite of his ferocious aspect, his wild hair, his uncovered throat, and his gruff voice. His locks, rising in erect rebellious bristles over his forehead, fall in capricious masses on a coat that is *not* cut after the latest fashion at the Jockey Club.

Pille was a pupil of his present colleague on the Jury, M. Barrias. He made his début at the Salon of 1865 with a "Bartholomew van der Helst." He has since devoted himself chiefly to painting in the anecdotic historic manner. Now and again, however, he takes a modern theme. His "Body-guard" (*Garde du corps*) was a fine bit of realistic work.

His great popularity among artists, counted for something no doubt, in his election to the Jury. He too, had his chances of a deputy's *mandat* while Opportunism was all-powerful, had he been so minded. M. Pille is the fast friend of Coquelin the younger.

EVARISTE VITAL LUMINAIS. — Of medium height, with a ruddy face, and snow-white hair. When he puts on a blue tie, he looks like a personification of the national flag. Born at Nantes in 1828, he is the son of a deputy in the National Assembly of 1848, and grandson of one of the Council of Five Hundred. Yet politics occupy a very small share of his thoughts. His favourite subjects, episodes in the story of ancient Gaul, are inoffensive alike to all parties. General Boulanger and his opponents may take their mighty rest, undisturbed by the exploits of Vercingetorix and Dagobert. On the other hand, Flaubert, "the last of the Gauls," as he was called, bitterly regretted that he had never had his portrait painted by Luminais. The painter of Chramne and of Queen Brunhilda, is a peaceful citizen, never so happy as at his own fireside and taking keen delight in the successes of his wife, also an artist of the first rank.

L. DOUCET



APRÈS LE BAL

SALON DE 1888



FÉLIX BARRIAS. — A fine old head, and open brow! M. Barrias is one of the men of '48, those faithful children of the Republic who desired nothing from her but the right to serve and worship her. It follows therefore that he is what is irreverently called *une vieille barbe*, in parliamentary circles. His patriotism has stood the test of action. In the war of 1871, though long past the age for service, he shouldered his rifle like the rest, and fought bravely in the ranks of the 8th battalion of the National guard.

In Art M. Barrias is a disciple of classicism. Léon Cogniet, under whose guidance he carried off the "Prix de Rome" in 1844 is still his prophet, and the traditions of the author of "Tintoretto painting his Dead Daughter" are handed on religiously to the pupils who pass through his studio, in many cases with brilliant results. For M. Barrias, while adhering loyally to the ancient school himself, has been wise enough not to hamper individual talent, and has turned out artists cast in such diverse moulds as Guillaumet and Vibert, Pille and Berne-Bellecour. In decorative work, he shews a catholic eclecticism. We find his signature alike in Parisian churches, and in the green-room of the Opera House.

GASTON CASIMIR SAINT-PIERRE. — A compound of artist and hermit. He lives a quiet, regular life in his own circle, and is seldom if ever, seen in society. Those who have been admitted into the sanctuary of his studio describe him as a middle-aged man, with long black hair, of much sweetness of manner. He has won his way by dint of modest unobtrusive merit, relying neither on the good fellowship of his brethren, nor on noisy self-advertisement. There is but one opinion as to his private virtues. He is a St. Peter who is sure of Paradise.

HECTOR LEROUX. — A Lorrainer, loyal both to God and man, notably to the special particle of humanity known as Jules Lefebvre. M. Leroux has the most sincere admiration for the painter of "Truth" (*La Vérité*), who gave him much friendly encouragement in his first efforts. A mighty traveller before the Lord, M. Leroux has shewn his magnificent red beard in Rome, in Greece, in Asia Minor and in Egypt. His wanderings have

borne fruit of a very profitable kind, and have been of immense value in the class of subjects he excels in. The ribbon of the Legion, among other well-earned honours, followed on his "Messalina," "Tibullus and Delia," and "Betrothal of Themistocles."

By virtue of his archæological knowledge, M. Leroux has become a sort of counsel specially retained by the tragic Drama. Parisian managers come to consult him in their difficulties, and bow to his authority on classic scenery and costume.

FRANÇOIS-LOUIS FRANÇAIS. — *Le Père Français*, as he is called in the studios, is the oldest member of the Jury. He was born in the year of the Campaign of France, 1814, but is nevertheless not the oldest of French living artists, by many years. M. Eugène Lami dates back to the first year of the century, and no doubt thinks the venerable Français a mere boy. The hills of Plombières, among which he was born, made a painter of M. Français. But before he could obey his vocation and set down their beauty on canvas, he had to work for his living as an engraver on wood for books. When at last he was able to follow his inclination, he became the pupil of Corot, forming a friendship with his master that lasted through life.

Italy inspired his brush for many years. His "Excavations at Pompeii" (*Fouilles de Pompéi*.) and "Ravine of Nepi" (*Le Ravin de Népi*) are still well-remembered. Of late he has turned to Breton scenery, and makes a yearly pilgrimage to Clisson, in search of subjects, bringing back a store of sketches to work upon in his studio in the Boulevard Montparnasse. Time has laid his hand very gently on the veteran landscape-painter, and the autumn of his life is rich with warm and mellow tints. Old age has not lessened his kindly interest in others, or his own serene content, and there seem to be hopes of a centenary for *le père Français*.

LÉON-GERMAIN PELOUSE. — The fifty years of M. Pelouse have left but little trace on his tawny hair and beard. He is an ardent lover of the country, and lived for a considerable time in the Chevreuse Valley, a

A. PROTAIS



LA FIN DE L'AVRIL

SALON DE 1884

painter's Paradise, almost as popular as Barbizon or Marlotte. He has since settled in Brittany, and has developed an intense devotion for that :

Granite land o'ergrown with oaks.

(*La terre de granit recouverte de chênes.*)

Like most landscape painters, M. Pelouse abhors the *pavé*, and during his rare sojourns in Paris, never ceases to lament the fate that tears him away from his beloved glades and copses. M. Pelouse's worst enemy will not accuse him of having won his place on the Jury by importunate calls upon the electors.

AUGUSTE FEYEN-PERRIN. — Tall and a little ungainly; his figure slightly bent, and his pervading expression one of melancholy, his regular features crowned with a forest of thick hair, and finished off by a patriarchal beard. Such is M. Feyen-Perrin, pupil of Cogniet and Yvon. His first contribution to the Salon was the "Return to the Cottage" (*Retour à la Chaumière*), of 1855. Ten years later, he gained a medal with his "Finding of the Body of Charles the Bold, after the Battle of Nancy." (*Charles le Téméraire retrouvé après la bataille de Nancy.*)

M. Feyen-Perrin has changed his genre more frequently than most modern painters. After a series of historical pictures, he took to marine subjects, and made a memorable success with his, "Return from Oyster-Fishing" (*Retour de la Pêche aux Huitres*) now in the Luxembourg. He next essayed portrait-painting, with equally happy results. His study of M. Alphonse Daudet was worthy of his famous model. He has been a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, since 1878. The decoration followed on his fine picture "Women of Cancale." (*Les Cancalaises.*)

PASCAL-ANATOLE-JEAN DAGNAN-BOUVERET. — A young artist whose brilliant early promise has been abundantly fulfilled. He is a small, dark, thin man, bearing some sort of misty likeness to the late Bastien-Lepage. He is married, and, like many other members of the new artistic generation, has pitched his tent in the Avenue de Villiers. He is a well-known, and very popular member of the modern school, and is already looked up to as more or less of a leader among the younger

painters. It may be this that has given a certain dominant touch to his manner, though he affects none of the authority of a master. He won early recognition among well-known amateurs. The late Albert Goupil specially distinguished him, and foretold a brilliant future for the then obscure painter. His prophecy seems to be in a fair way of fulfilment.

ALFRED-PHILIPPE ROLL. — A fair-haired, pleasant, lovable man, whom one of his friends has aptly described as strong as a lion, and gentle as a lamb.

His every thought in life seems to centre in brush and palette, and well-bred though he is, he can with difficulty conceal his boredom when banished from his tubes of vermilion, chrome yellow, and ivory black, especially ivory black. How comes it that this refined being loves to fill his huge canvases with such prosaic realities as workmen's sheds, groups of artisans, master-builders, etc.? It is beyond my powers to divine the subtle affinities binding together M. Roll and all things pertaining to masonry and mortar. Fortunately, his ashlar have proved anything but stones of stumbling to his career. The young artist-athlete has laid an iron grasp on success, and is now one of the most prominent members of the modern realistic school.

ERNEST-ANGE DUEZ. — A giant, for all the world like one of those sturdy Gauls whose Merovingian torsos M. Luminais has so often painted. When he steps out after a meeting of the Jury, expanding his broad chest to the air, and throwing up his arms to a level with the lower branches of the chestnuts, he looks like a perambulating Eiffel-tower. Like nearly all colossal men, he overflows with good-nature, while, unlike the majority of them, he is gifted with a keen and trenchant wit. His smart sayings are full of piquant originality. He is an elephant who has swallowed a monkey.

His wife is the charming daughter of Doctor Lebastard, and he has the good taste to follow an old fashion, and make her his frequent model, with the result that one knows not which to admire first, picture or sitter, or which to envy most, artist or husband.

LUC-OLIVIER MERSON. — The son of a distinguished art-critic. He lives in the Boulevard Saint-Michel, and on Saturday evenings holds a sort of informal levee in the large studio, a prominent ornament of which is a fine portrait of Madame Merson by Machard.

M. Merson is of medium height, his light hair, slightly sprinkled with grey, his face clean shaven, his cheeks rather full, his eyes small, but very brilliant in moments of animation.

He is a man of education and wide reading, as evidenced by the fine library he has gradually collected in the last few years. His facility of composition is extraordinary. He has the true decorative faculty, and has furnished many cartoons for the Gobelins, as well as a large number of important drawings for illustrated publications. His favourite *genre*, however, is history or ideal subjects like his "Spring." (*Le Printemps*.)

HENRY GERVEX. — A son of Helvetia, but a naturalised Frenchman, and so thoroughly at home on Parisian asphalt that he can listen to the "Ranz des Vaches" without tears. Could he be happy anywhere but on his adopted boulevard, where in a few minutes he can pass from a meeting of the Jury, to the "Mirlitons," stopping on the way, to chat for a few minutes with some one who amused him last night, or will amuse him to-morrow. He delights no less in the Champs-Élysées, where he can turn Ledoyen and his guests at their little tables, into a first-rate subject. But he is, perhaps, happiest in the studio, where lovely ladies consent to be his models, on the one condition that their blushes be hidden by a mask.

The epithet *bien parisien*, so much abused in its general application, exactly fits M. Gervex. He combines the sharpness of the Parisian gamin with the breeding of Society. In his veins there seems to run an elixir of the Faubourgs, a sort of *essence de Parisine* as Roqueplan used to call it.

EMMANUEL LANSYER. — M. Lansyer is French, in spite of the English note in his name. So thoroughly French, that he has been able to express his subtle appreciation of beauty in verse, that is at once harmonious and French.

He was born at Ile de Bouin (Vendée) in 1837. In appearance he is a type of the inspired painter. A tall, handsome man, with picturesquely

disordered hair and beard. He is one of the closest friends of André Theuriet, with whose subdued refinement his own talent has much in common. He was a pupil of Harpignies, at whose house he is a frequent guest. At the banquet I have before alluded to, he paid a graceful tribute to his old master. Like so many others, he has a warm affection for Brittany, a province he may almost claim as native soil. The names of most of his pictures begin or end with the syllable "ker" and the contemplation of his works awakes a vague desire to don the *bragoubas*, and dance to the music of the *binou*. M. Lansyer wears the red ribbon in his buttonhole, we need hardly say. After employing him to paint a view of the Palais de la Légion d'Honneur, in 1875, the Government could hardly do less than give him the right to enter its doors.

PIERRE D'IGNY.



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